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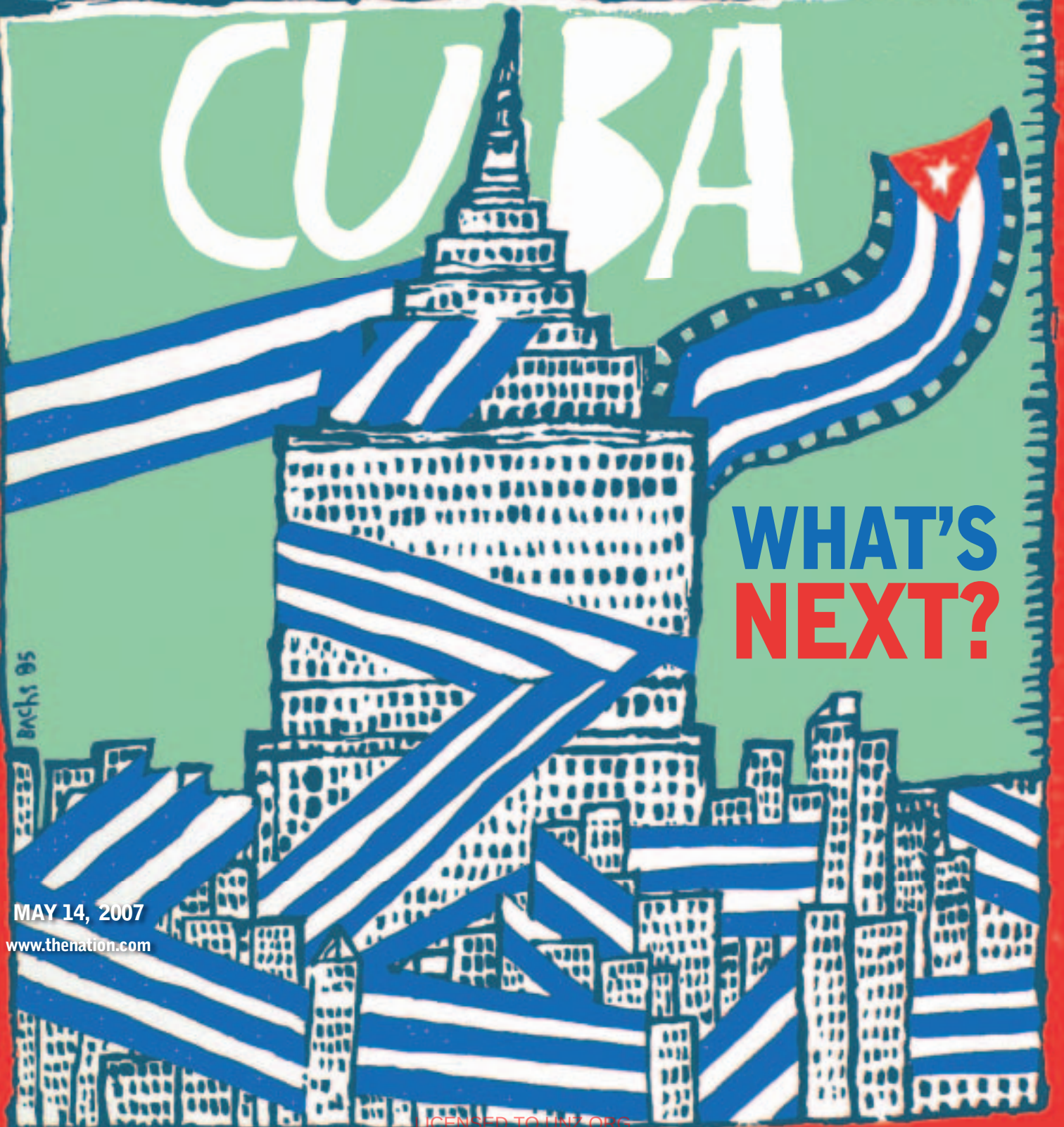

WHAT'S NEXT?

MAY 14, 2007
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LETTERS

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

'DOUBLE-ENTRY MORAL BOOKKEEPING'

New York City

■ Sam Moyn is correct. It is indeed tempting to tell a tale of human rights in isolation: to excavate the origins of our current fascination with rights, illustrate their growing acceptance and application, structure the resulting story as a Whiggish narrative of progress—and call it history. I have no idea whether Lynn Hunt succumbs to this temptation (I have not yet read her book), but she certainly wouldn't be the first ["On the Genealogy of Morals," April 16].

However, I would like to offer two minor amendments to Professor Moyn's account. The first concerns his description of my own "conversion." I did not once upon a time excoriate French left-wing intellectuals for their "failure to champion rights." I could hardly have done so—they actively defended the rights of others on many famous occasions. I did, though, charge Sartre and many of his contemporaries with double-entry moral bookkeeping. When they looked West they saw repression, exploitation and the inexcusable violation of inalienable rights; but when they looked East they saw only the collateral damage of Historical Necessity. This seemed to me both ethically inconsistent and politically irresponsible. It still seems that way to me today. Indeed—fifty years on—André Glucksmann, Alain Finkielkraut, Pascal Bruckner and other prominent contemporary French intellectuals have uncritically acclaimed Washington's war on Islamic Fascism, displaying the same taste for dogmatic abstraction over local knowledge that I diagnosed in their predecessors. Surely Moyn would agree?

Second, I have never supposed that "rights talk" alone could constitute a sufficient language of politics. In 1988, well before I made my name "excoriating French left-wing intellectuals" (!), I wrote (in *Eastern European Politics and Societies* II, ii) of Václav Havel, Adam Michnik, George Konrád and others that if they wished to be taken seriously in a post-Communist world they would have to abandon "antipolitics" and begin to "think politically." The extent to which some of them have failed to do so may be seen in their enthusiastic, naïve backing of Bush's war.

Some people, myself included, advocated foreign intervention in Bosnia and Kosovo while opposing our adventure in Iraq. Sam Moyn might find this inconsistent, but (on this occasion at least) it is the world that is inconsistent, not us. During the Balkan wars individuals' rights were under ascertainable threat in real time. Outside intervention could make a difference, and it did. This was not the case in Iraq. We should always be suspicious of the invocation of universal "rights" as a cover for sectional interests. But it doesn't follow from this that talk of rights is "really" always about something else. Sometimes it is, and sometimes it isn't. How, then, should we adjust our response? Well, there is a serviceable Keynesian answer to that: "When the facts change, I change my mind. What do you do?" TONY JUDT

MOYN REPLIES

New York City

■ No reader of Tony Judt's *Past Imperfect* will fail to recall his bracing attack on the double standards of French intellectuals who denounced the injustice of Western society while ignoring or rationalizing the crimes of the Soviet bloc. But Judt's indictment went far beyond the accusation of inconsistency, reproaching French intellectuals—indeed, the French nation—for having lost the ability even to think in terms of rights due to worries about their abstraction and partiality. In an entire chapter of his book, as well as a separate article, Judt examined the reasons for this collective philosophical error. "For much of the past two hundred years," Judt concluded, "the French did not take rights seriously" ("Rights in France: Reflections on the Etiolation of a Political Language," *The Tocqueville Review*, 1993). Whatever one thinks of the argument, it makes Judt's sweeping recent dismissal of rights, precisely for their formalism and mystification, even more striking. Far from restricting his ire to this or that invocation of rights, Judt's criticism of the language for its "abstract universalism" targets rights as such. It is the precise cynicism about rights put on trial in his earlier work.

To judge from his letter, it was only a matter of careless formulation. It is good that Judt has now clarified that the value of rights claims depends after all on who invokes them, in what circumstances and to what ends. But that was as true during the cold war as it is in the age of the global war on terror.

As I mentioned Judt in my article only to point out this specific inconsistency—one of appearance only, it turns out—I need not respond to the other remarks in his characteristically thought-provoking letter. SAMUEL MOYN

ALL THE LEAD PAINT IN NEW YORK...

Southlake, Tex.

■ David Rosner and Gerald Markowitz's "Getting the Lead Out" [April 23] took me back fifty-four years to when I was a pediatric resident at NYU's Bellevue Medical Center. We admitted a little girl in convulsions who turned out to have lead poisoning. Her mother said she loved to chew on the window sills. Would it really be possible to remove all the lead paint in New York City, let alone the state, as ordered in Rhode Island? Are there any good alternatives? LEON HOROWITZ, MD

HARIRI—THE GOOD & THE BAD

New York City

■ Annia Ciezadlo's book review "Sect Symbols" [March 5] is disconcerting and full of contradictions. She seems to be unaware that Lebanese Shiites are a socially and politically diverse community. Her article robs them of this diversity and denies them agency by representing them as a homogeneous group, oppressed and discriminated against. This allows her to explain, quite seamlessly, their allegiance to Hezbollah. Furthermore, she claims that Rafik Hariri, Lebanon's ex-premier who was assassinated on February 14, 2005, was both an entrepreneur and a politician who transcended sectarianism in his practices and appeal. Then she claims that he is a *zaim*, the epitome of the sectarian chieftain and warlord in the Lebanese context.

It is important to keep in mind that Hariri is remembered for many things—some are good, some are bad—but murder is definitely not one of them. For the author to begin and end her article by invoking Hariri as a murderer is erroneous at best. At worst, this gesture is quite problematic at a time when the debate over the trial of his assassins rages in Lebanon, as it could be interpreted as "death to the tyrant" and as justice having been served through his murder. In her attempt to do justice to the "oppressed" Shiites, she turns them into Hariri's assassins, justified in their act. This mode of representation is misleading and journalistically irresponsible. TAREK EL-ARISS

CIEZADLO REPLIES

Beirut

■ In a country where Shiites are denied voting power according to their numbers, consigned to the care of a religious militia and live in areas that experience routine outbreaks of typhoid, I can hardly claim credit for robbing them of their diversity or denying them agency; Lebanon's confessional system of government has already handled that job quite well. Hariri did not start out as a product of that system, but he ended up as its apotheosis—a *zaim* whose parliamentary seat was passed on to his son through patrilineal privilege rather than merit or skill. If this evolution is a "contradic-

(Continued on Page 38)

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IN THIS ISSUE

2 **LETTERS**

EDITORIALS & COMMENT

3 CHANGING COURSE ON CUBA

4 VIRGINIA TECH: ONLY CONNECT
Bruce Shapiro

5 ONE OF MY OWN
Richard Kim

6 SARKO VS. SÉGO IN FRANCE
André Schiffrin

COLUMNS

6 DEADLINE POET
A Bring-the-Troops-Home Rally…
Calvin Trillin

8 BEAT THE DEVIL
Is Global Warming a Sin?
Alexander Cockburn

9 SUBJECT TO DEBATE
Regrets Only
Katha Pollitt

10 LOOKOUT
Sacrificial Wolfie
Naomi Klein

ARTICLES

11 A NEW STANCE TOWARD HAVANA
The passing of perpetual hostilities.
Julia E. Sweig

17 THE CHANGING OF THE GUARD: A FORUM
Alberto Coll, Peter Kornbluh (moderator), Saul Landau, William LeoGrande, Philip Peters, Ramón Sánchez-Parodi

20 TERROR AND THE COUNTERTERRORISTS
A double standard for the Cuba Five.
Peter Kornbluh

26 MIAMI VISE
Hard-liners call the shots.
Max J. Castro

32 FERDINAND VII
A *memento mori* of empire.
Gore Vidal

33 WATCHING THE REPORTERS
Cuba warns the foreign press.
John Dinges

36 A DANGEROUS LITTLE BEEHIVE?
A children's theater blocked at the border.
Rosa Miriam Elizalde

BOOKS & THE ARTS

39 MUSIC: Ornette Coleman
David Yaffe

46 MENGESTU: The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears
Tara Gallagher

47 JAMES: Cultural Amnesia: Necessary Memories From History and the Arts
William Deresiewicz

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EDITORIALS

Changing Course on Cuba

What do you call a US policy that allows a notorious international terrorist to walk free on bail? A policy that detains and fines a class of New York high school students for taking a study trip over spring break? A policy that has been repudiated at the United Nations by virtually every other country in the world? A policy that, after forty-eight years of abject failure, is still based on the false assumption that success—in the form of "regime change"—is just around the corner? Imperial. Illogical. Irrational. Insane.

As Wayne Smith, former chief of the US interest section in Havana, has observed, Cuba seems to have "the same effect on American administrations that the full moon has on werewolves." For almost five decades this small Caribbean nation has inspired some of the most rabid US policies, from economic embargoes and diplomatic sanctions to covert ops, paramilitary invasions and assassination attempts. Fidel Castro has survived such aggression from nine US Presidents, and it now appears he may outlast a tenth.

The next occupant of the White House will have an unusual opportunity to bring US policy toward Cuba into the twenty-first century. Slowly but surely, the political actors are realigning. Castro's illness opened up unprecedented possibilities for change on the island, and the stable transition of power to his brother Raul exposed as a fallacy Washington's prediction that the regime would disintegrate without its founder. Recent opinion polls reflect more moderate attitudes among Cuban-Americans, a shift that could ease the vise-like grip hard-line exiles have held over the crucial swing state of Florida. The Democratic takeover of Congress has placed limits on the power of right-wing Cuban-American legislators. Finally, the Administration has drained the blood from its global crusade for regime change with the self-inflicted wound known as the Iraq War.

In Washington, there is a reinvigorated, and increasingly bipartisan, effort to pressure Bush, presidential contenders and the new Congress to lift parts of the embargo and move toward normal relations. On April 18, for example, the New America Foundation launched an initiative to shape a "new consensus" on Cuba at a press conference featuring Colin Powell's former chief of staff, Col. Lawrence Wilkerson. Speakers at the event echoed a recent report from the Center for Democracy in the Americas, *In Our National Interest: Top Ten Reasons for Changing US Policy Toward Cuba*: "We need a new Cuba policy rooted in America's national interest and our common sense."

Those reasons, which include the constitutional right to travel, the harm the embargo has done to American business and the advancement of US security interests such as drug interdiction, have begun to resonate in Congress. Bills are being introduced to lift or modify the trade and travel embargoes. In an opinion piece in the April 14 *Washington Post*, Republican Jeff Flake and Democrat Charles Rangel argued that it is time to "increase American influence by building bridges rather than barriers to Cuba."

Toward that goal, *The Nation* has devoted this issue—guest-edited by Peter Kornbluh—to Cuba and US policy toward the island. We agree with Wilkerson that this is "the dumbest policy on the face of the earth." The time has come to change it.

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COMMENT

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Virg. Tech: Only Connect

Students and teachers at Virginia Tech began returning to their classrooms a week after Seung-hui Cho murdered thirty-two and killed himself, but presumptions and speculation—about Cho, about the actions of officials, about the role of the media—only escalate. The result, as those who have studied Columbine and other such mass killings understand all too well, is the creation of a national mythology of violence and closure rather than a sober assessment of what happened and what it all means. So as the initial shock and horror of the shootings pass, a few questions deserve close scrutiny.

What was wrong with Cho? Arguments about his precise diagnosis will probably occupy forensic psychiatrists and profilers for years. It is not idle speculation, but for most of us Cho's diagnosis is almost irrelevant. More urgent: Could a more robust mental health safety net have deterred his rampage? To attempt to answer this question honestly would mean confronting the nation's long, shameful abandonment of the seriously mentally ill, beginning with the dumping of patients from state psychiatric hospitals into neighborhoods lacking community services in the 1970s, to Ronald Reagan's campaign to deny them Social Security and legal aid, to today's warehousing of the mentally ill in prisons.

Is this about guns? Within a few hours of the Blacksburg shootings, Virginia Governor Tim Kaine was declaring the gun issue irrelevant and any discussion of it an act of political exploitation. Ever since, the gun lobby has been ginning up its listservs along the same lines. Yet as facts emerge, it is clear that the politics of handgun laws have everything to do with the killings.

Let's start with the most basic. No permit is required to purchase a handgun in Virginia. There is no waiting period on gun sales. In more than a dozen states, those simple requirements would have slowed Cho down. More important, Virginia does not count serious mental illness in the cursory instant background checks run before handgun sales, except for the tiny minority of those actually hospitalized. Yes, the federal Brady background-check law prohibits sales to the "mentally defective," a standard that would seem to prevent someone like Cho—found an "imminent danger" by two separate judges—from buying a weapon. But the federal law, incredibly, leaves it up to the states to gather and report statistics. No Virginia data collection, no federal stop. This single contradiction reveals just why the long bargain between the gun lobby and the states' rights movement is so dangerous.

Could a mass shooting in the heart of Virginia turn into the Hurricane Katrina of the handgun debate? There is some evidence that the gun lobby is worried; the NRA has reportedly been talking to gun-friendly Congressional Democrats about closing up a few background-check loopholes as a way of forestalling more sweeping legislation. Governor Kaine himself is now talking about "a way to tighten this and to get more data onto the system." Will the argument go further? So far the evidence suggests that the NRA can relax. Most Democrats believe that embracing gun-law reform would damage their electoral prospects and land them back in Michael Dukakisville.

How could TV networks have aired Cho's videos? Criticism of

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NBC's decision to air selections from Cho's video package, and the decision of other networks to follow suit, came from two directions: those who warned that it could breed copycats and those who argued that it was disrespectful to Cho's victims. Yet on balance, it must be said that the broadcast had a salutary effect: The bizarre images and soundtrack showed Cho's rampage vividly as the product of mental illness. There's been no debate on declining social values, a culture of violence or any other explanation beyond Cho's insanity. What's more, had NBC suppressed the images, conspiracy theories would no doubt have arisen to take their place, poisoning the discourse as surely as the suppressed details of 9/11 have bred the corrosive "truth movement." So while the Blacksburg media circus undoubtedly had more than its share of ethical offenders, the news value of the videos was significant, at least in limited doses—a nuance the networks seemed to grasp, ending rebroadcasts after less than twenty-four hours.

Why didn't anyone stop him? As facts emerge about Cho's long record of troubling encounters with teachers, police and the courts, it is the inevitable and essential question to ask of those institutions. Why didn't Virginia Tech heed the warnings of Cho's worried teachers? Why didn't the school follow up, formally or informally, after his psychiatric commitments? Why wasn't his stalking of women properly understood as a potential gateway to more serious illness and violence? The point is not to excoriate an individual university president or police officer or judge but to ask: Why didn't any of you connect the dots? That is an issue of social ethics as much as of specific policies; it is what unites the failure of gun laws and the failure of the mental health system. It reflects an ideology divorced from consequence as surely as the Iraq War or the betrayal of New Orleans. The demand the Virginia Tech massacre places on the school, on Virginia, on all of us, is simple: Only connect.

BRUCE SHAPIRO

Bruce Shapiro, a Nation *contributing editor, is executive director of the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma.*

One of My Own

When the face of Seung-hui Cho, *aka* Cho Seung-hui, *aka* Seung Cho, *aka* A. Ishmael, Ismail Ax, Question Mark, Spanky, *aka* the Virginia Tech gunman, first flashed across the television screen, I felt my heart sink. Not just because of the thirty-two murders he had committed twenty-four hours earlier or because he was a South Korean immigrant—although for those reasons, too—but because, at that dreadful unveiling, he reminded me of a cousin of mine who died on his twentieth birthday of a drug overdose in someone's basement in Austin, Texas. Upon his memory now lies another ghost, one of a mass murderer, the most notorious Korean American in history.

On second glance, my cousin and Seung-hui Cho don't look that much alike—so what's in a face? What's in blood, race, nation, culture, folk? What's in this moment when by some kind of spectral kinship I feel, suddenly, very Korean?

Across the diaspora, Koreans are asking the same questions, or at least are stuck in the same loop. President Roh Moo-hyun has expressed condolences and apologies on four separate occasions, saying, "I and my fellow citizens can only feel shock and a wrenching of our hearts." South Korean Ambassador Lee Tae-sik suggested that Korean Americans "repent" for Cho's crimes by fasting for thirty-two days, one day for each of the dead. Korean newspapers and diplomats worried that the Virginia Tech massacre would imperil US-Korea relations, particularly a proposed free-trade agreement between the two nations. The Korean newspaper *Chosun Ilbo* published an op-ed by Hong Sun-tae, a professor of business administration at Hanyang University, who, taking cues from both George W. Bush and corporate capitalism, called on Koreans to "make haste before the negative image of the Korea brand is embedded in people's hearts and minds."

But it is among Korean Americans that this sense of implication has been most keenly felt. The Korean American Coalition has established a Virginia Tech Memorial Fund to compensate the victims' families. In Korean American churches parishioners whispered and wailed tearful prayers. At Virginia Tech and other colleges, Korean students fled campuses fearing retribution, while university presidents warned students not to direct their anger at "innocent members of the Asian Pacific American community." As news of the killer's background emerged, Asian American bloggers anticipated anti-Asian violence and cautioned the media against circulating Orientalist stereotypes about kamikaze killers, wronged honor and vengeful Asian males.

As it turned out, there were few reports of anti-Korean or anti-Asian violence, and apart from some xenophobic websites, the media's relentless coverage has been largely free of the worst racial and ethnic stereotypes. (Instead, the focus was on Cho's writing, hoping some mix of literary analysis and pop psychology will unravel the mystery of his madness.) But race still colors perceptions of the events. Cho's hardworking immigrant parents—who, like my own, toiled as dry cleaners—and thoroughly assimilated sister (a Princeton graduate who works for the State Department) epitomize the "model minority" against which Cho's silence and alienation seem all the more inexplicable and deranged. Race and culture, moreover, figured in Cho's recent past. He was taunted by high school classmates for his broken English, which his college roommates assumed accounted for his silence, until they discovered, among other things, that their mute cohabitant was an English major.

Ultimately, though, Cho's actions would be easier to comprehend if he had railed against white Americans or directed his fatal gunfire only at whites. For then Cho's story would have neatly inverted the model-minority myth, replacing the racialized fantasy of perfect assimilation with an equally racialized nihilistic antagonism. But Seung-hui Cho did not provide us with such a story line, no chickens coming home to roost. Cho's targets included Korean and Chinese students. He reviled "snobs," "brats" with "trust funds" and a taste for "debaucheries" and "vodka and cognac," but such resentment suggests class rage more than racial antipathy. His plays, *Richard McBeef* and *Mr. Brownstone*, are populated with white or racially undefined characters, and their fury centers on sexual trauma rather than racial alienation.

Unlike the London bombings of 2005, Cho's actions do not appear to be politically or ideologically motivated. Those ter-

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COMMENT

rorist acts prompted much hand-wringing over British national identity and Muslim assimilation, but in some sense the lines had been clearly drawn. Leftists and Muslim community leaders could warn of growing cultural and economic disenfranchisement; conservative nationalists could propose tightened borders and monoculturalism.

No such easily discernible agendas emerge from the Virginia Tech tragedy. Korean Americans are left with a figure we can neither completely claim nor completely reject—although some, like Adrian Hong in the *Washington Post*, are pushing mightily for rejection. Calling Cho a "deranged individual act[ing] on his own initiative," Hong spoke for many Korean Americans when he said, "If our heads are hung low, this should be in grief, not in apology or shame." Others have explained the outpouring of remorse in terms of Korean cultural homogeneity; UCLA anthropology professor Kyeyoung Park observed, "In Western culture there is an emphasis on guilt; in many Eastern cultures the emphasis is on shame." But the tears in Korean churches evoke something else too: what literary scholar Anne Anlin Cheng calls the "hidden grief" of assimilation, the sense of loss and failure that haunts the model minority. What is evident to so many Korean Americans is that Cho was unmistakably one of us, and his experiences, up to and including those of April 16, were shaped, if not fully explained, by that identity. How much and in what way racial alienation affected his obvious insanity, we may never know. And so we are left with another stereotype—that of the inscrutable Asian, the eternal, unknowable enigma. RICHARD KIM

Richard Kim teaches American studies at Skidmore College.

Sarko vs. Ségo in France

After weeks of uncertainty and anxiety, the French have voted pretty much the way the polls suggested they would in this first round of presidential balloting. A record 84 percent turnout put conservative candidate Nicolas Sarkozy in the lead at 31 percent, the Socialist Ségolène Royal at 26 percent and the center-right François Bayrou at a respectable 19 percent. The only surprise was the far-right neo-Fascist Jean-Marie Le Pen's vote, which at 10 percent was a million votes below expectations and his worst polling in three decades. Sarkozy's attempt to steal Le Pen's votes apparently succeeded. Presumably those who did vote for Le Pen were less worried about the second round (the two top vote-getters will compete in a runoff May 6), as were the 10 percent who voted for one of the candidates to Ségo's left. The second round would rally behind her those who cried "T-S-S!" (*Tout Sauf Sarkozy*, or "Anyone But Sarkozy"). Indeed, many voted for Bayrou because polls suggested he might defeat Sarkozy.

In the long and difficult campaign, one thing was painfully clear. Le Pen with his nationalist and xenophobic slogans succeeded in moving everyone to the right. As in the US elections before the Iraq War, everyone made concessions to the more conservative candidate. Sarko, already known for his anti-immigrant excesses, famously calling the inhabitants of France's ghettos "scum" during the rioting a year and a half ago, went even further in aping Le Pen's rhetoric. With every passing day Sarko, a clever and able politician, would invoke France's Catholic tradition, the mantle of de Gaulle, the need to crack down on illegal immigrants. (As Interior Minister he had already sent the cops into schools to ferret out children of undocumented immigrants, reminiscent of the collaborationist Vichy government's deportation of more than 11,000 Jewish schoolchildren during World War II.) Forgotten were his progressive proposals that France begin to consider affirmative action. Sarko's image as an angry and dangerous man was constantly reinforced.

Le Pen, who rightly boasted that everyone was trying to steal his thunder, became even more outrageous, calling Sarko an immigrant, pointing to his Hungarian, Greek (and Jewish) grandparents and stating that Sarko had only one French-born ancestor—again, a fallback to the criteria used by Vichy to determine who was Jewish and therefore not truly French.

Faced with all this, rather than move to the left, where she felt support for her was assured, Ségo joined the nationalist and conservative clamor. Having initially voiced her admiration for the New Labour politics of Tony Blair, she began to defend the flag, arguing that each French home should display one, and played "La Marseillaise" rather than the traditional Socialist "Internationale" at each of her tricolor rallies. Her campaign seemed carefully based on Hillary Clinton's, following the latter's caution and conservatism. Ségo's social proposals evoked her past as a military daughter, as when she argued that delinquent teenagers, understood to be largely of immigrant stock, should be retrained by the army. Her most daring economic promise, raising the minimum monthly wage by 250 euros over five years, would not even keep up with inflation, as was pointed out by her young Trotskyist opponent, Olivier Besancenot, whose postman's salary was not much higher and who polled an impressive 4 percent in the first round, more than twice that of the ever-declining Communists.

Surprisingly, the centrist Bayrou sometimes found himself on Ségo's left. Claiming that he alone could unite all Frenchmen, this longtime conservative politician successfully reinvented himself as the mainstream alternative. His detailed platform, full of reasonable centrist solutions, occasionally raised issues assiduously avoided by the others, such as arguing that France's media should not be controlled by conglomerates whose major customer is the

CALVIN TRILLIN

A Bring-the-Troops-Home Rally in Baghdad

As more troops are sent—yes, sent in as fodder—
Who's proven he might be a powerful prodder
For bringing them home, through methods much odder
Than those of the doves? Muqtada al-Sadr.

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COMMENT

government and who are deeply tied to the arms industry.

What is astonishing about the right-wing thrust of these candidates is that most French voters expressed very little interest in the issues that preoccupied the major candidates. A February Eurobarometer poll published in *Le Monde* showed that a mere 7 percent were concerned about immigration and 11 percent about crime. The issues that troubled people the most were unemployment (53 percent), retirement (36 percent), the environment (35 percent) and the cost of living (30 percent). Voters were worried about globalization and the loss of jobs to lower-paid workers in Eastern Europe and Asia. At least four minor candidates reflected anxiety over the massive decline of independent farmers, the most famous being radical global-justice hero José Bové.

Le Pen's solution to the unemployment problem was straightforward: Give priority to the French, close the borders and deport as many foreigners as possible. With a lack of concrete proposals from the left, many disgruntled workers—some of them former Communists—have been attracted to his cause; indeed, his turnout has often been highest in areas that were once CP strongholds. Rumors circulated that he might lure enough of these to finish second in the first round, as he did in 2002, when he shocked the nation by outpolling Socialist candidate Lionel Jospin. Sarkozy assumed that following the "Anglo-Saxon" model of neoliberal economic restructuring would suffice, never discussing the problems that have remained unsolved in Britain and the United States (such as the little-publicized figure that there are at least as many jobless in New York City—40 percent of black men—as in the infamous Paris ghettos).

The first-round results suggest that the second will be a more traditional contest between the neoliberal right and the conservative left. As soon as the results were in, Sarkozy gave a speech in which he reverted to the "nice" Sarko, proclaiming his concern for the poor and unemployed—whose numbers would doubtless increase if his economic policies were implemented. Ségo continued as before, hoping that in addition to the 10 percent who voted to the left of her, she might woo enough Bayrou voters, frightened by Sarko's divisiveness, to eke out a victory.

Sarkozy now invokes "values" and appeals to the silent majority, tipping his chapeau to Reagan and Republican strategists and trying to convince centrist voters that his would be a compassionate, not totally Thatcherite, conservatism. Royal seems satisfied that her vague and centrist strategy is working, but the latest polls show Sarko ahead in the second round. It will be a very tight race.

ANDRÉ SCHIFFRIN

André Schiffrin's memoirs, A Political Education: Coming of Age in Paris and New York, *have just been published by Melville House.*

ON THE WEB: Katrina vanden Heuvel examines the real (antidemocratic) legacy of Boris Yeltsin; John Nichols reviews Bill Moyers's new PBS documentary *Buying the War*; David Corn looks into the federal investigation of the machinations of Karl Rove; and David L. Chappell reviews five books on the civil rights movement (www.thenation.com).

NATION NOTES

Nation *readers! Help us write a guidebook on the American left. Tell us your favorite places, products and services in the categories below. We need ideas from all over the country. E-mail suggestions to nationguide@thenation.com. Thank you.*

—The Editors

Theaters with left/political repertories

Political satire cabarets, street theaters

Restaurants with a left identity, ownership or history, or that serve natural, organic or "slow" food

Bars and saloons with lefty traditions or where lefties congregate, and historic watering holes

Romance/sex: e.g., feminist erotica, consenting-adult clubs, singles meeting places

Reading clubs, discussion groups

Public policy/advocacy groups (the ones you most strongly like and support)

Environmental activist groups

Environmentally friendly products

Recreation/nature: e.g., parks, beaches, ski runs, summer camps, nudist colonies, pagan and Wicca festivals

Gardening: e.g., victory gardens, natural fertilizers

Energy: sustainable and alternative fuel sources

Media

- magazines: left/progressive zines, alternative weeklies, community papers, political movement papers, radical-critical organs, literary/political quarterlies
- radio: stations, programs, talk-show hosts, community radio
- television: e.g., socially conscious PBS stations
- Internet: e.g., great political, cultural, literary or entertainment blogs

Natural foods—local, mail-order sources

Health: alternative medicines/clinics/spas

Artisanal wine, beer, spirits, cheeses, etc.

Green markets (community-sponsored agriculture)

Clothing: e.g., nonsweatshop brands

Fair-deal insurance: health, drug, medical, life

Financial: cooperatives, anti-redlining banks

Mutual funds: green, socially conscious

Legal: legal aid societies, pro bono defense attorneys, groups that litigate for causes like the ACLU

Travel: tours for left-minded people such as work-study, political, cruises

Real estate: e.g., co-housing sites, green homebuilders, solar-powered homes, homes built of recycled materials, honest brokers, "Old Left" retirement places

Funeral homes that Decca Mitford would love (those with fair pricing)

Cemeteries (fair-priced and those with left-history links)

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ALEXANDER COCKBURN

Is Global Warming a Sin?

In a couple of hundred years historians will be comparing the frenzies over our supposed human contribution to global warming to the tumults at the latter end of the tenth century as the Christian millennium approached. Then as now, the doomsters identified human sinfulness as the propulsive factor in the planet's rapid downward slide. Then as now, a buoyant market throve on fear. The Roman Catholic Church sold indulgences like checks. The sinners established a line of credit against bad behavior and could go on sinning. Today a world market in "carbon credits" is in formation. Those whose "carbon footprint" is small can sell their surplus carbon credits to others less virtuous than themselves.

The modern trade is as fantastical as the medieval one. There is still zero empirical evidence that anthropogenic production of carbon dioxide is making any measurable contribution to the world's present warming trend. The greenhouse fearmongers rely on unverified, crudely oversimplified models to finger mankind's sinful contribution—and carbon trafficking, just like the old indulgences, is powered by guilt, credulity, cynicism and greed.

Now imagine two lines on a piece of graph paper. The first rises to a crest, then slopes sharply down, levels off and rises slowly once more. The other has no undulations. It rises in a smooth, slow arc. The first, wavy line is the worldwide CO_2 tonnage produced by humans burning coal, oil and natural gas. It starts in 1928, at 1.1 gigatons (i.e., 1.1 billion metric tons), and peaks in 1929 at 1.17 gigatons. The world, led by its mightiest power, plummets into the Great Depression and by 1932 human CO_2 production has fallen to 0.88 gigatons a year, a 30 percent drop. Then, in 1933, the line climbs slowly again, up to 0.9 gigatons.

And the other line, the one ascending so evenly? That's the concentration of CO_2 in the atmosphere, parts per million (ppm) by volume, moving in 1928 from just under 306, hitting 306 in 1929, 307 in 1932 and on up. Boom and bust, the line heads up steadily. These days it's at 380. The two lines on that graph proclaim that a whopping 30 percent cut in man-made CO_2 emissions didn't even cause a 1 ppm drop in the atmosphere's CO_2. It is thus impossible to assert that the increase in atmospheric CO_2 stems from people burning fossil fuels.

I met Martin Hertzberg, PhD, the man who drew that graph and those conclusions, on a *Nation* cruise back in 2001. He remarked that while he shared many of *The Nation*'s editorial positions, he approved of my reservations on the question of human contributions to global warming, as outlined in columns I wrote around that time. Hertzberg was a meteorologist for three years in the Navy, an occupation that gave him a lifelong mistrust of climate modeling. Trained in chemistry and physics, a combustion research scientist for most of his career, he's retired now in Copper Mountain, Colorado, but still consults from time to time.

Not so long ago, Hertzberg sent me some of his recent papers on the global warming hypothesis, a thesis now accepted by many progressives as infallible as Papal dogma on matters of faith. Among them was the graph described above, so devastating to the hypothesis.

As Hertzberg readily acknowledges, the CO_2 content of the atmosphere has increased about 21 percent in the past century. The world has also been getting just a little warmer. The not-very-reliable data on the world's average temperature (which omit data from most of the world's oceans and remote regions, while overrepresenting urban areas) show about a 0.5 degree Celsius increase between 1880 and 1980, and still rising. But is CO_2, at 380 ppm in the atmosphere, playing a significant role in retaining the 94 percent of solar radiation that the atmosphere absorbs, as against water vapor, also a powerful heat absorber, whose content in a humid tropical atmosphere can be as high as 20,000 ppm? As Hertzberg says, water in the form of oceans, snow, ice cover, clouds and vapor "is overwhelming in the radiative and energy balance between the Earth and the sun.… Carbon dioxide and the greenhouse gases are, by comparison, the equivalent of a few farts in a hurricane." And water is exactly that component of the Earth's heat balance that the global warming computer models fail to account for.

It's a notorious inconvenience for the Greenhousers that data also show CO_2 concentrations from the Eocene period, 20 million years before Henry Ford trundled out his first Model T, 300 to 400 percent higher than current concentrations. The Greenhousers deal with other difficulties, like the medieval warming period's higher-than-today temperatures, by straightforward chicanery, misrepresenting tree ring data (themselves an unreliable guide) and claiming the warming was a local European affair.

We're warmer now because today's world is in the thaw following the recent ice age. Ice ages correlate with changes in the solar heat we receive, all due to predictable changes in the Earth's elliptical orbit round the sun and in the Earth's tilt. As Hertzberg explains, the clinical heat effect of all of these variables was worked out in great detail between 1915 and 1940 by Milutin Milankovitch, a giant of twentieth-century astrophysics. In past post-glacial cycles, as now, the Earth's orbit and tilt give us more and longer summer days between the equinoxes.

Water covers 71 percent of Earth's surface. Compared with the atmosphere, there's 100 times more CO_2 in the oceans, dissolved as carbonate. As the post-glacial thaw progresses the oceans warm up, and some of the dissolved carbon emits into the atmosphere, like fizz from soda. "The greenhouse global warming theory has it ass backwards," Hertzberg concludes. "It is the warming of the Earth that is causing the increase of carbon dioxide and not the reverse." In vivid confirmation of that conclusion, several new papers show that for the last 750,000 years, CO_2 changes have always lagged behind global temperatures by 800 to 2,600 years.

It looks like Poseidon should go hunting for carbon credits. The human carbon footprint is of zero consequence amid these huge forces and volumes, not to mention the role of the giant reactor beneath our feet: the Earth's increasingly hot molten core.

Next: Who are the hoaxers, and what are they after? ■

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KATHA POLLITT

Regrets Only

So now you know. It really does matter who's President and which party controls Congress. A Democratic-controlled Congress would never have passed the Partial-Birth Abortion Act, which banned intact dilation and extraction abortions and, in flagrant violation of *Roe v. Wade*, lacked an exception to preserve the health of the woman. A Democratic President would never have signed such a bill. Nor would he have nominated the extremely conservative antichoicers John Roberts and Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court, which on April 18 upheld, in *Gonzales v. Carhart* by a 5-to-4 vote (Roberts, Alito, Kennedy, Scalia, Thomas—all GOP nominees), a ban essentially identical to one rejected 5 to 4 in *Stenberg v. Carhart* seven years ago, when Sandra Day O'Connor was on the bench.

So, NARAL Pro-Choice America—or whatever your latest bland, pandering brand name is—maybe, much too late, you'll rethink your policy of supporting prochoice Republicans, who made the majorities that set the agenda that led us to this very bad place. And maybe, Tom Frank and assorted liberal know-it-alls of the op-ed page and blogosphere who've been telling us to calm down because Republicans are all bark and no bite on abortion, you'll take a look at the real world. Sometimes politicians deliver on their promises. As for all you prochoicers with qualms out there—who think abortion is icky and "late term" abortion especially so, although you couldn't say exactly when that even is, and who wonder why women are so careless and shouldn't emergency contraception have taken care of this already?—maybe it's time to start defending the right you say you believe in, instead of cutting the ground out from under it.

Sorry. I'm upset. For the first time, the Supreme Court has ruled that the health of an actually existing human woman doesn't matter, never mind *Roe*. Nor does a doctor's judgment. What counts, according to Justice Kennedy's majority decision, is that this particular method of abortion "devalues human life." Besides, the woman, confused little flower nodding her head in the breeze, needs to be protected from regret, the "grief more anguished and sorrow more profound" that might come when she realizes the exact nature of the procedure. Regret! If that's a criterion, no one could ever decide about anything. Maybe we women should call up Justice Kennedy whenever we have a big decision to make. "Um, excuse me, Justice Kennedy, Bob just proposed, but what if he's not The One? And while I have you on the phone, the job in California sounds so great, but what if I never finish my novel? And what if I vote Republican because I'm scared of Osama, but then Congress tries to make me have a baby?" Numerous commentators have downplayed the significance of *Gonzales v. Carhart*—you can still get an abortion, just not with this method, which was only used in about 2,000 cases a year anyway. But that ho-hum approach overlooks what is new here and where it's going. I've mentioned the paternalism and the *Roe*-disregarding lack of a health exception. But let's not forget the sheer useless moral posturing: A woman can wind up injured, and her fetus will be aborted anyway, but the tender sensibilities of Kennedy and his four brethren will be protected! What other procedures will they find "shocking" down the line? It's not as if the alternatives—dismembering the fetus in the womb and extracting it piece by piece; poisoning it and delivering it dead—are delightful to contemplate. Why shouldn't they find more and more abortions unacceptable—maybe even all of them?

Perhaps they will. Because another thing this decision demonstrates is how deeply antichoice disinformation has penetrated the worlds of power and influence. Kennedy's regretful woman comes straight from the antichoice playbook, in which women who choose abortion are invariably bewildered, heedless, misled, manipulated and in need of guidance from wiser heads. When Kennedy refers to the gynecologists and obstetricians who perform abortions as "abortion doctors," he's repeating antichoice language intended to impugn the professionalism of these physicians and make it easier to disregard their judgment about how best to care for their patients. Abortion doctors! What do they know? The ban itself—calling the procedure "partial birth abortion," as if the fetus were days from being born (it's actually performed in the second trimester); singling out a method and using the emotions it arouses to violate the trimester distinctions of *Roe* and the pre-viability and post-viability distinction of *Casey* is part of the antichoice strategy to shut down legal abortion one restriction, one legal precedent at a time. And what about prochoicers' weak responses? NARAL caved in on the ridiculous Unborn Child Pain Awareness Act. South Dakota's Healthy Families confined its opposition to the lack of rape, incest and health exceptions in the state's abortion ban, thus setting the stage for acceptance of future bans that added those provisos.

Beyond all this, it's flatly outrageous that five men—five devout Catholic men, 56 percent of the court—can impose their will on women's bodies, talking about "anatomical landmarks" as if a woman's reproductive system were some kind of national park. None of them will ever be pregnant or want or need an abortion. That should have made them humble. I wonder if anyone reading this will live to see a Supreme Court in which a five-woman majority rules on an issue in which the reproductive lives of men, and only men, are at stake. Right now, Ruth Bader Ginsburg is all alone up there, watching her legacy go up in smoke.

* * *

With the ban in effect, the small number of physicians who perform second-trimester abortions will be under tremendous pressure to restrict or abandon abortion care. That means more women may be coming to New York City for abortions. You can support safe abortions for low-income women, and shake your fist at the Vatican Five, by making a donation in honor of Justice Ginsburg to the New York Abortion Access Fund, which helps women from all over pay for their terminations. Even a small donation can make a huge difference (NYAAF: FDR Station, Box 7569, New York, NY 10150). ■

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NAOMI KLEIN

Sacrificial Wolfie

It's not the act itself, it's the hypocrisy. That's the line on Paul Wolfowitz, coming from editorial pages around the world. It's neither: not the act (disregarding the rules to get his girlfriend a pay raise) nor the hypocrisy (the fact that Wolfowitz's mission as World Bank president is fighting for "good governance").

First, let's dispense with the supposed hypocrisy problem. "Who wants to be lectured on corruption by someone telling them to 'do as I say, not as I do'?" asked one journalist. No one, of course. But that's a pretty good description of the game of one-way strip poker that is our global trade system, in which the United States and Europe—via the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization—tell the developing world, "You take down your trade barriers and we'll keep ours up." From farm subsidies to the Dubai Ports World scandal, hypocrisy is our economic order's guiding principle.

Wolfowitz's only crime was taking his institution's international posture to heart. The fact that he has responded to the scandal by hiring a celebrity lawyer and shopping for a leadership "coach" is just more evidence that he has fully absorbed the World Bank way: When in doubt, blow the budget on overpriced consultants and call it aid.

The more serious lie at the center of the controversy is the implication that the World Bank was an institution with impeccable ethical credentials—until, according to forty-two former Bank executives, its credibility was "fatally compromised" by Wolfowitz. (Many American liberals have seized on this fairy tale, addicted to the fleeting rush that comes from forcing neocons to resign.) The truth is that the bank's credibility was fatally compromised when it forced school fees on students in Ghana in exchange for a loan; when it demanded that Tanzania privatize its water system; when it made telecom privatization a condition of aid for Hurricane Mitch; when it demanded labor "flexibility" in the aftermath of the Asian tsunami in Sri Lanka; when it pushed for eliminating food subsidies in post-invasion Iraq. Ecuadoreans care little about Wolfowitz's girlfriend; more pressing is that in 2005, the Bank withheld a promised $100 million after the country dared to spend a portion of its oil revenues on health and education. Some antipoverty organization.

But the area where the World Bank has the most tenuous claim to moral authority is in the fight against corruption. Almost everywhere that mass state pillage has taken place over the past four decades, the Bank and the IMF have been first on the scene of the crime. And no, they have not been looking the other way as the locals lined their pockets; they have been writing the ground rules for the theft and yelling, "Faster, please!"—a process known as rapid-fire shock therapy.

Russia under the leadership of the recently departed Boris Yeltsin was a case in point. Beginning in 1990, the Bank led the charge for the former Soviet Union to impose immediately what it called "radical reform." When Mikhail Gorbachev refused to go along, Yeltsin stepped up. This bulldozer of a man would not let anything or anyone stand in the way of the Washington-authored program, including Russia's elected politicians. After he ordered army tanks to open fire on demonstrators in October 1993, killing hundreds and leaving the Parliament blackened by flames, the stage was set for the fire-sale privatizations of Russia's most precious state assets to the so-called oligarchs. Of course, the Bank was there. Of the democracy-free lawmaking frenzy that followed Yeltsin's coup, Charles Blitzer, the World Bank's chief economist on Russia, told the *Wall Street Journal*, "I've never had so much fun in my life."

When Yeltsin left office, his family had become inexplicably wealthy, while several of his deputies were enmeshed in bribery scandals. These incidents were reported on in the West, as they always are, as unfortunate local embellishments on an otherwise ethical economic modernization project. In fact, corruption was embedded in the very idea of shock therapy. The whirlwind speed of change was crucial to overcoming the widespread rejection of the reforms, but it also meant that by definition there could be no oversight. Moreover, the payoffs for local officials were an indispensable incentive for Russia's apparatchiks to create the wide-open market Washington was demanding. The bottom line is that there is good reason that corruption has never been a high priority for the Bank and the IMF: Its officials understand that when enlisting politicians to advance an economic agenda guaranteed to win them furious enemies at home, there generally has to be a little in it for those politicians in bank accounts abroad.

Russia is far from unique: From Chile's dictator Augusto Pinochet, who accumulated more than 125 bank accounts while building the first neoliberal state, to Argentine President Carlos Menem, who drove a bright red Ferrari Testarossa while he liquidated his country, to Iraq's "missing billions" today, there is, in every country, a class of ambitious, bloody-minded politicians who are willing to act as Western subcontractors. They will take a fee, and that fee is called corruption—the silent but ever-present partner in the crusade to privatize the developing world.

The three main institutions at the heart of that crusade are in crisis—not because of the small hypocrisies but because of the big ones. The WTO cannot get back on track, the IMF is going broke, displaced by Venezuela and China. And now the Bank is going down.

The *Financial Times* reports that when World Bank managers dispensed advice, "they were now laughed at." Perhaps we should all laugh at the Bank. What we should absolutely not do, however, is participate in the effort to cleanse the Bank's ruinous history by repeating the absurd narrative that the reputation of an otherwise laudable antipoverty organization has been sullied by one man. The Bank understandably wants to throw Wolfowitz overboard. I say, Let the ship go down with the captain. ■

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ARTICLES

THE PASSING OF THE POLITICS OF PERPETUAL HOSTILITY

A NEW STANCE TOWARD HAVANA

JULIA E. SWEIG

"The issue is not how to change US policy toward Cuba. The issue is how to change the Cuban regime," Havana-born US Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez said not once, not twice, but throughout a recent speech titled "Cuba After Fidel." The secretary's disciplined effort to stay "on message" was likely a response to the emerging pressure on Washington to abandon its policy of perpetual hostility and assume a new approach toward Havana—given new political realities in both capitals.

In Washington and Havana, two striking events may have laid the groundwork for real political drama this year: After almost fifty years of supreme rule, a gravely ill Fidel Castro transferred "provisional" power to his brother Raul last July, and after twelve years of being out of power, the Democratic Party resumed control of Congress last November.

In Cuba, eight months of stability and business-as-usual have passed since the announcement of Castro's illness, reported to be diverticulitis. Castro's health has improved, and he is slowly re-entering public life, but he appears not to have resumed his previous around-the-clock work schedule, nor his notorious micromanagement of major and minor affairs of state. Yet the regime has not collapsed—as so many officials, analysts and exiles wishfully believed it would—exposing the utter failure of the US policy of regime change. In Washington, Democrats who want a more enlightened posture toward Havana have assumed control of key Congressional committees. Precisely because it is now an open secret that Washington's half-century don't talk/don't trade/don't travel policy toward Cuba has gone nowhere, the new US Congress has the opportunity to lay the foundation for an overhaul of America's Cuba policy that a centrist of either party could pursue once in the White House in 2009.

If the Administration were not so embroiled in Iraq, Castro's dire illness might have provoked a collective cry of "Ding-dong, the witch is dead," but the unanticipated shifting of the guard in Cuba and subsequent stability there has caught Washington unawares. With the exception of Secretary Gutierrez's muscular speech, the Administration's silence on the issue has been deafening, and telling. Caleb McCarry, the Administration's "transition coordinator" for Cuba, has been keeping a notably low profile. Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Tom Shannon has spent his time recently with a number of senior Administration officials and the President himself trying to recover lost ground with the countries in Latin America that really count, such as Brazil and Mexico.

To be sure, a few lonely voices still carry the torch: Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte testified in his last hearing as intelligence czar in January that despite official Cuba's efforts at an orderly transfer of power, the United States does not want to see a "soft landing" in Cuba. And Cuban-American members of Congress in both parties—but especially House Republicans Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Lincoln Díaz-Balart and his brother Mario Díaz-Balart—remain unreconstructed but increasingly isolated defenders of overthrowing the Cuban regime. Together with some White House allies, they are willing to risk, and perhaps even welcome, the consequences of a crash landing, on the gamble that the violence and chaos that would ensue would create a post-Castro, post-socialist, post-revolutionary vacuum into which they and their increasingly divided constituents could step.

Beyond these Cuban-American Congressional holdouts, both parties in Washington are experiencing regime-change fatigue. It's an open secret in Washington, one that failure in

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Iraq and stability in Cuba have helped spread, that if taken today a secret vote in Congress would reveal an overwhelmingly bipartisan majority in favor of ending economic sanctions against Cuba and allowing all Americans to travel there freely. This is indicated even by votes taken between 1998 and 2001 in the Republican-controlled Congress. Agricultural, travel and energy lobbies; Cuban-American family associations; and cultural, religious and humanitarian groups all currently support an opening with Cuba. Their views are fully representative; some 52 percent of the American public, according to opinion polls, favor lifting the trade embargo against Cuba and pursuing more normal relations.

But despite a broad constituency for a new Cuba policy, despite the emergence from within the Cuban-American community of new voices calling for change (joined by some prominent old ones) and despite the growing importance of non-Cuban Latino voting blocs around the country, the Democratic and Republican political operators will be loath to risk the 6–8 percent margin Cuban-American voters in Florida could deliver to presidential candidates in 2008. After all, precisely because of its internal stability and zealous commitment to its own national security, Cuba is now a strategically insignificant issue for American foreign policy. It is hard to make the case to any national politician that it is worth taking a risk to change Cuba policy when the status quo, however ineffectual, causes little harm and is thus low stakes by comparison with the real biggies—whether immigration, Iraq or Iran.

A secret vote in Congress would reveal an overwhelming bipartisan majority in favor of ending economic sanctions against Cuba.

Nevertheless, the time to make that case is now.

Washington has been poised on earlier occasions to revamp its Cuba policy. During Bill Clinton's first term, his Administration launched a series of "people to people" initiatives to try and build unofficial bridges to Cuban society. In the aftermath of Cuba's shoot-down of two Cessnas flown by an exile group, Clinton did sign the 1996 Helms-Burton Act, which tightened sanctions and codified the embargo into law, but by 1997 his Administration resumed a policy of at least partial engagement. As Pope John Paul II planned a historic visit to the island, the White House and the State Department identified loopholes in the embargo laws that allowed activities that would provide "support to the Cuban people." By 1999 the Clinton Administration had moved to expand flights and broaden communications, including mail service to and from the island. By 2000 some 200,000 Americans had made the trip to Cuba—most of them legally.

A number of those initiatives were conceived through unofficial efforts to bring together Republicans and Democrats (including longstanding supporters of the embargo) to craft a new approach. The Council on Foreign Relations, for example, sponsored an independent task force, which I staffed, chaired by two former assistant secretaries of state. Efforts like this helped create a new bipartisan consensus for change in Cuba policy and a willingness to improve official and unofficial ties between the two countries.

These included: "military-to-military confidence-building measures," like counternarcotics collaboration; lifting the travel ban for all but tourist travel; allowing Americans to send financial assistance to a broad range of individuals and institutions on the island; granting visas for a wide range of Cuban professional travel to the United States; legislative proposals allowing US agricultural sales to the island; permitting US companies whose property had been nationalized in the early years of the revolution to begin the process of negotiating compensation directly with the Cuban government (through debt equity swaps, for example) and allowing "limited American commercial activity on the island" to support these activities.

In the face of forceful lobbying by industries opposed to sanctions and by a variety of anti-embargo advocacy groups, the White House and Congress adopted some measures that created new openings toward the island. In 1994 US and Cuban diplomats began to meet twice a year to discuss immigration issues. After negotiations with the Cuban military in the late 1990s, the US Coast Guard posted a counternarcotics officer at the US interest section in Havana, and the Treasury Department issued a multitude of licenses for research, educational, cultural and humanitarian travel to Cuba. In the spring of 2000, Congress passed an amendment ending the embargo on food and medicine sales.

A slew of hiccups and major crises—most notably, the Elián González affair—and domestic political pressure on both sides of the Straits of Florida exerted their predictable drag on progress. But momentum for change continued on Capitol Hill even after George W. Bush took office. Bipartisan majorities in Congress passed a handful of bills to loosen the embargo, including one lifting the travel ban. These went nowhere, as the White House issued veto threats and the House leadership under Tom DeLay stripped the bills in midnight meetings. As former President Jimmy Carter made his historic trip to Havana in May 2002, Bush hard-liners tried, unsuccessfully, to smear Cuba with the WMD charge, alleging that Cuba was developing bioweapons capacity that could be deployed against the United States or shared with rogue regimes.

But having won Florida by the slimmest of margins in 2000 (if he won it at all), Bush sacrificed a rational Cuba policy on the shrine of electoral politics as his re-election campaign heated up. For example, the White House shut down the immigration talks and moved aggressively to close off other financial flows in and out of Cuba. In mid-2004 the President's Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba announced a major rollback on travel to Cuba, including limiting Cuban-Americans to only one visit to their families on the island every three years—with no exceptions. In July 2006, just twenty-one days before Castro's announcement of the transfer of power in Cuba, the Bush commission called for "bold, decisive action and clarity of message" on US policy. The goal of its new recommendations would be to "undermine the

Julia E. Sweig is the Nelson and David Rockefeller senior fellow and director for Latin American studies at the Council on Foreign Relations. Her most recent book is Friendly Fire: Losing Friends and Making Enemies in the Anti-American Century.

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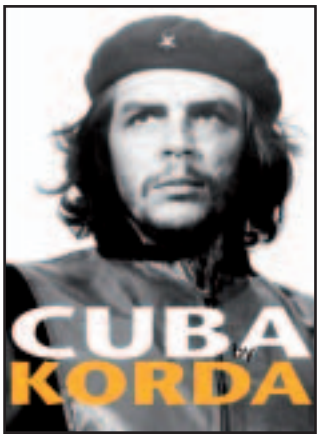

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CUBA BY KORDA by Alberto Korda

This is the first publication in English of the work of Cuban photographer Alberto Korda, celebrated for his iconic portrait of Che Guevara—the most reproduced image in the world. This book depicts the full range of Korda's extraordinary camerawork, from his first work as a fashion photographer, to the powerful photographs that made him Cuba's best-known photographer of the revolutionary period.

GUANTÁNAMO by Roger Ricardo & David Deutschmann

How is it possible for the United States to still control a large slice of territory on the island of Cuba? This book offers a unique history of the controversial US base of Guantánamo.

"Imagine if, after defeating the British in our revolution, we then let them keep a few thousand troops and a bunch of battleships in New York Harbor!" —Michael Moore

$14.95 (paper)

$19.95 (paper)

FIDEL CASTRO READER

The voice of one of the 20th century's most controversial political figures—as well as one of the world's greatest orators—is captured in this unique selection of Castro's key speeches over 50 years. Love him or hate him, there is no denying he is a "master of the spoken word," as Gabriel García Márquez has described him.

JFK: THE CUBA FILES by Fabián Escalante

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regime's succession strategy" and "ensure a genuine democratic transition on the island." "For reasons of national security and effective implementation," it continued foreboddingly, "some recommendations are contained in a separate classified annex."

Classified or not, US efforts to block a succession of power in Cuba have failed. Not even the regime's most hardened critics expect Jimmy Carter to be monitoring multiparty elections in some fantasy Havana Spring anytime soon. Changes in Cuba are in the offing, but they won't look much like earlier transitions in South America, South Africa or Eastern Europe, the most heavily referenced models in the debate over how outsiders can turn Cuba into something it has resisted becoming for almost half a century.

Nor is there any guarantee that lifting the embargo and launching talks with Cuba will cause Cuba to change. Liberals who believe that lifting the embargo will bring democracy to Cuba are just as misguided as their conservative doppelgängers about the capacity for American power to reshape countries—whether halfway around the world or ninety miles off the Florida coast. But precisely because the United States plays such a large role in Cuba's national psyche, lifting the shadow of the Goliath of the North that hangs over the island's domestic politics would increase the potential for a more open debate about what kind of country Cubans want and how to get there. Cuba is without a doubt going to change after Fidel, and the United States has a strong national interest in establishing both official and unofficial ties with Cubans on the island who have a stake in that future.

Changes in Cuba are in the offing, but they won't look much like earlier transitions in South America, South Africa or Europe.

The Bush White House is unlikely to move off its current intransigence. But with the Democrats controlling Congress and Cuban-Americans trending toward favoring a new approach—and while the high season of presidential campaigning is still a year away—now is the time to lay the groundwork for the next administration in 2009. Congress is in a position to launch its own bipartisan policy review and press the issue.

Already, there are bills gaining bipartisan endorsements that would, variously, lift the ban on Cuban-American travel, lift the ban on all American travel, allow Cuba access to private credit for food purchases, neuter the most egregious aspects of the Helms-Burton Act or get rid of the embargo entirely.

A number of committees are also gearing up to hold hearings to expose the corruption and politicization associated with US-Cuba policy. In particular, Massachusetts Democrat Bill Delahunt, who co-chairs with Arizona Republican Jeff Flake the bipartisan Cuba Working Group, will now have the power to exercise long-overdue oversight and launch investigations on a number of fronts.

One order of business under consideration in Congress is to explore why Cuba remains on the State Department list of terrorist nations. The first witness could be Paul Bremer, the former Bush proconsul in Iraq, who could explain to the public why he recommended that Clinton remove Cuba from the State Department list in the late 1990s. Former Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez could illuminate the State Department's rationale for keeping Cuba on the list by explaining why, in the 1980s, he asked Fidel Castro to allow former Basque terrorists to reside in Cuba. Colombia's former president, Andrés Pastrana, and current president, Álvaro Uribe, could explain why Havana has sponsored talks with Colombia's terrorist groups as well. And, to illuminate the rationale for America's historic tolerance of anti-Cuba terrorist activities, Cuban terrorist Orlando Bosch should be summoned from his Miami retirement—made possible by an administrative pardon granted by George H.W. Bush—to testify about his alleged collaboration with Luis Posada Carriles in the 1976 terrorist explosion of Cubana Flight 455, which killed all seventy-three passengers on board.

A second order of business would be to investigate the fiscal boondoggle of Radio and TV Martí and other "democracy promotion" programs directed at Cuba. Current Bush Administration officials in charge of these efforts should be asked why the lion's share of the millions of taxpayer dollars spent to "promote democracy" in Cuba seldom make it to the island but are distributed in no-bid contracts to the Miami-based Cuban exile cottage industry. And they should be asked to account for funds for Radio and TV Martí that have been pilfered in kickback schemes.

The Armed Services Committees could call former generals Barry McCaffrey and Jack Sheehan, who have both visited Cuba and met with Raul Castro, to offer an assessment of how US national security might benefit from establishing channels with the Cuban military. They could testify to the cooperation that the Cuban military has provided on counternarcotics operations—including Cuba's recent decision to deport a Colombian drug lord back to Bogotá so he could be extradited to Miami—as well as to the support Cuba has provided to operations at Guantánamo Bay in the name of assisting the fight against international terrorism. And the Foreign Affairs Committees could ask former secretaries of state Henry Kissinger and George Shultz to explain why they called for a bipartisan commission to review Cuba policy in the 1990s and whether such an initiative would, in their view, be appropriate today.

Whether or not the 110th Congress makes new law, a year of hearings, testimony and votes will, at a minimum, lay down some markers demonstrating that Congress and the country are poised for an overhaul of Washington's approach to the island.

George W. Bush will leave office with a legacy of having overseen one of the worst failures ever in American foreign policy. He presided over a near global collapse in American standing and prestige. On his watch, Guantánamo morphed from a local symbol of the US colonial impulse in the hemisphere to a global icon of what's gone wrong with America. But the President could begin to salvage his and America's tattered foreign policy legacy with a few strokes of the pen.

He could sign an executive order restoring the ability of Americans, including Cuban-Americans, to travel to Cuba for family, humanitarian and educational purposes. He could

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One court decision:

EXECUTION OR THE ROAD TO FREEDOM

Stand with Mumia Abu-Jamal May 17 in Philadelphia

On May 17, 2007 Mumia Abu-Jamal's lead attorney, Robert R. Bryan, will present oral arguments to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit in Philadelphia. Despite a mountain of evidence of his innocence, a U.S. criminal "justice" system saturated with race and class bias has reduced his case to just four issues: *exclusion of Blacks from the jury panel; racial bias; improper instructions to the jury regarding the death penalty; and prosecutorial misconduct.*

In a 1982 frame-up trial that was condemned by many prominent groups and individuals, including Amnesty International, the European Parliament, the NAACP, the National Lawyers Guild, President Nelson Mandela of South Africa, President Jacques Chirac of France, the Congressional Black Caucus, hundreds of U.S. and international trade unions, and the Detroit, San Francisco, and Paris, France, city councils, Mumia was falsely convicted of the murder of a Philadelphia police officer.

Six eyewitnesses stated that the real killer fled the murder scene while Mumia himself was found near dead next to the slain police officer.

Critical evidence of Mumia's innocence was destroyed or withheld. "Witnesses" never at the murder scene were coerced to state that they were present. Police distorted events and material evidence at the murder scene. Mumia himself was excluded from the majority of his own trial.

Mumia is the victim of a political frame-up.

He is an award-winning journalist, whose widely-respected social commentaries are today broadcast on 124 radio stations.

In 1981, as a radio commentator and President of the Philadelphia Association of Black Journalists, he was a leading human rights critic of the Philadelphia Police Department, many of whose officers were later indicted and convicted on charges of corruption, witness intimidation and the planting of evidence.

Mumia's trial judge, Albert Sabo, was overheard by court stenographer, Terri Maurer Carter, to say in his antechambers about Mumia, "Yeah, and I'm going to help 'em fry the n----r."

Mumia has been on death row nearly 25 years. He has become a worldwide symbol in the fight against the barbaric and racist death penalty. Pennsylvania authorities seek, for the third time, to impose the death penalty and murder Mumia by lethal injection.

We must make the political price of this execution and continued incarceration too high to pay. We stand with Mumia as he fights for his legal right to a new trial and for his life and freedom.

Join us in Philadelphia on Thursday, May 17, 9:30 am at the U.S. Courthouse, 6th and Market Streets, Philadelphia. On the East Coast call: 215-476-8812. On the West Coast, we mobilize at the U.S. Court of Appeals Building, 7th Street and Mission, San Francisco, 4-6 pm. Call: 415-255-1085.

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issue licenses for American corporations to start negotiating settlements for their nationalized properties. And he could allow Condoleezza Rice to establish a trusted back channel to explore the seriousness of Raul Castro's recent proposals for bilateral negotiations. He could close down the detention centers in Guantánamo as a first step toward giving the base back to Cuba. None of this would require Bush to sign a new law that hard-liners in his own party would vociferously protest. Apart from the kudos he'd garner from governments and publics in Europe and Latin America soured on American power, at home Republicans would also send a positive signal to non-Cuban Latinos, especially in Florida, who resent the distorted attentions and special benefits historically directed to Cuban-Americans by both parties.

After a half-century of failure and delusion it might just be liberal fantasy that a dose of realpolitik could lead to a new approach to Cuba. Fortunately, polling and voting patterns of the American people, even in Florida, are beginning to show that whoever takes the White House in 2009 will have the political running room to turn Secretary Gutierrez's speech on its head. Washington's policy may not bring full-blown capitalism, let alone democracy, to a perennially closed society. But an overhaul of US policy may well relax the siege mentality that keeps Cuba's own reforms muzzled—and recast US-Cuba relations in a more normal light. That's why a little reform might be downright revolutionary. ■

CUBA HAD A DRESS REHEARSAL FOR FIDEL'S EXIT FROM POWER. WILL REFORMS COME NEXT?

The Changing Of the Guard

WILLIAM EGGLESTON

What has happened in Cuba since Fidel Castro yielded power to his brother Raul? How do Cuban authorities see the changing international arena, particularly the trend to the left in Latin America? And what, almost fifty years after the Cuban Revolution, does the Castro government want in its relations with the United States? To address these questions, *The Nation* convened a forum of veteran Cuba analysts and a longtime Cuban diplomat, moderated by guest editor Peter Kornbluh.

THE NATION: *Since Fidel Castro surprised the world last July by transferring his duties to his brother, Defense Minister Raul Castro, Cuba has experienced nine months of a semi-succession of power. How do you evaluate this unprecedented period?*

WILLIAM LEOGRANDE: What's noteworthy is what has *not* happened. There have been no demonstrations, no rush of rafters setting sail for Miami, no noticeable difference at all in how the leadership team has governed the island. Fidel must be pleased. The succession machinery he carefully constructed over the past decade is working as planned. His illness lets him watch from the sidelines to see how well his successors manage without him, and they seem to be doing just fine. We all like to think we're indispensable, and no one has been more indispensable to the Cuban Revolution than Fidel Castro. But the last nine months have shown that people in Miami and Washington who expect the Cuban government to collapse the instant Castro dies are going to be disappointed.

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RAMÓN SÁNCHEZ-PARODI: I agree. What we have experienced in Cuba has been a kind of rehearsal, a foreshadowing of what will take place in the event Fidel exits from political life—which could happen for biological reasons. Much to the surprise of those who predicted dire straits for Cuba—exodus, uprising, mass protests against the Revolution, infighting—life goes on as usual.

SAUL LANDAU: And the people who started the Revolution in 1953, Fidel and Raul, still prevail.

ALBERTO COLL: It was as if you did a major emergency fire drill and everything functioned the way it was supposed to—even if it turns out to be only a drill instead of the real thing. Its relative success can only serve to emphasize the massive failure of the US policy of isolation, which has served only to isolate Washington and deny the United States any kind of influence over the people currently running the country.

PHILIP PETERS: All who watch Cuba have had a question in the back of their minds: Is it a one-man show that dissolves when Fidel Castro leaves the scene, or is it a political system that carries on? These nine months have answered that question pretty clearly. This is a stable government, though one cannot minimize the challenges a successor government will eventually face.

Forum Participants

***Alberto Coll**, principal deputy assistant secretary of defense from 1990 to 1993, is president of the DePaul University International Human Rights Law Institute. He came to the United States from Cuba at age 13, while his father was serving a nine-year sentence as a political prisoner.*

***Peter Kornbluh** directs the Cuba Documentation Project and the Chile Documentation Project at the National Security Archive. He is the author of* The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability *(New Press).*

***Saul Landau**, an Emmy-winning documentary filmmaker, writer, scholar and radio host, is a Fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies. His films include* Fidel, The Sixth Sun *(about the peasant uprising in Chiapas),* Cuba Today *and* We Don't Play Golf Here and Other Stories of Globalization. *His latest book is* A Bush and Botox World.

***William LeoGrande**, dean of the School of Public Affairs at American University, is the author of numerous books on US-Cuban relations and US policy toward Latin America, most recently* Our Own Backyard: The United States in Central America, 1977–1993.

***Philip Peters**, a State Department official in the George H.W. Bush Administration, is vice president of the Lexington Institute. He currently advises the Cuba Working Group, a bipartisan caucus in the House of Representatives.*

***Ramón Sánchez-Parodi** served as Cuba's first chief of the Cuban Interest Section between 1977 and 1989; he then served as deputy foreign minister and as ambassador to Brazil. He is now chief of the Department of International Relations at Cuba's Customs Agency. He expresses his opinions here in a nonofficial capacity.*

Have you seen any indications under Raul Castro's leadership of a move toward economic reforms or political change?

SÁNCHEZ-PARODI: It all depends on how you define "reforms." In Cuba there are no reforms taking place, at least not in the sense that they are interpreted abroad by those who would like to witness a return to capitalism.

The changes that you see now in Cuba are aimed at upgrading the performance of its institutions and improving quality of life for Cuban families. The demands of the population focus on three basic areas: nutrition, housing and transportation. In addition waste, inefficiency and misuse of resources have created dissatisfaction and unjustifiably limited the well-being of individuals and the society as a whole. But addressing those issues has no bearing on the country's social, economic and political organization.

LEOGRANDE: Raul's reputation as an economic pragmatist comes from his experiments with Western business management techniques in the defense industry during the 1980s and his support for reintroducing farmers' markets during the depths of the economic crisis in the 1990s, even though Fidel opposed them. Raul finally convinced Fidel that nothing was more important than providing people with enough food and that farmers' markets would boost agricultural production—which they did. As minister of the armed forces, Raul also gained a reputation as a good manager who gets results.

In October the newspaper *Juventud Rebelde* ran a series of investigative stories exposing corruption in the state sector of the economy. The government then appointed a committee of scholars to examine socialist property in Cuba for sources of corruption and inefficiency. At the same time, academic economists are openly debating alternative development strategies and candidly discussing Cuba's macroeconomic problems. Anticorruption campaigns are not new, but acknowledging that these problems may be rooted in how the economy is organized—that's new.

On the political front, however, Raul has not shown any indication of being more tolerant of dissent than Fidel. In fact, Raul has often been central to past government crackdowns on dissidents. In early 1996, it was Raul who gave a tough speech to the Central Committee of the Communist Party criticizing Cuban academics for becoming too involved with their counterparts overseas and letting themselves be swayed by enemy ideology. With Fidel on the sidelines and the United States promising to disrupt the succession, the rest of the leadership will be especially sensitive about the risks posed by internal opposition.

COLL: Several things have been most striking about Raul during his short tenure as acting president. First, he has made it clear he wants to shake things up by encouraging more debate and criticism. The articles in *Juventud Rebelde* were remarkable.

The Cuban system is well-known for tolerating very little public dissent, enforcing conformity, looking with disfavor upon criticism and shoving open discussion of problems under the rug. This makes Raul's actions even more interesting because he has insisted that in order for the country to address its serious challenges it needs to adopt a public culture that is more critical and open. While it's difficult to gauge how far Raul's change in style will translate into a change in substance, I see this as a fresh development that may indicate the start of something new. In politics, big changes often start from little acorns such as these.

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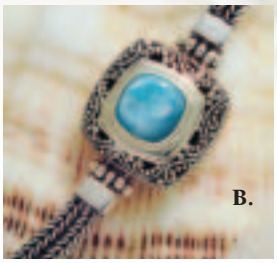
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Terror and the Counterterrorists

On November 17, 2000, shortly after arriving in Panama City for a summit of Ibero-American leaders, Fidel Castro held a press conference to announce that the legendary Cuban exile terrorist Luis Posada Carriles had also come to Panama—on an assassination mission. The Cuban authorities subsequently supplied a video of Posada and three co-conspirators meeting in front of their hotel. Within forty-eight hours Panamanian officials located a gym bag containing thirty-three pounds of C4 explosives that Posada apparently had planned to use to blow up the auditorium where Castro was scheduled to speak.

How did the Castro government know of Posada's plot? Cuban intelligence, known as the DGI, had a high-level mole in one of the exile groups reporting on the assassination operation as it evolved. The Cuban spy program potentially saved dozens of lives and averted an act of international terrorism.

As recently as November 2005, Posada's leading financial benefactor was caught with an arsenal of machine guns and explosives.

Perhaps more than any other nation over the past fifty years, Cuba has consistently faced both threatened and real assassination attempts, sabotage efforts, armed attacks and bombings, infamous among them the midair destruction of a Cubana passenger plane in 1976. (CIA and FBI documents implicate Posada, who was once paid by the agency as a demolitions trainer, as the mastermind of that attack.) Long after the CIA abandoned its direct efforts to overthrow the Castro regime and terminate its leadership, militant anti-Castro groups continued their campaign of violence. After viewing a 1977 CBS special titled *The CIA's Secret Army*, on violent Cuban exile operations in Florida, President Jimmy Carter was, according to a recently declassified White House memorandum, "appalled at the idea that people could use US territory as a base for terrorist actions."

Yet even in the post-9/11 world, US soil continues to be used for such purposes. As recently as November 2005, Posada's leading financial benefactor in Miami, Santiago Alvarez, was caught with a military-grade arsenal of machine guns, grenades, silencers, explosives and thousands of rounds of ammunition—leading to speculation that violent exiles were planning another major operation against Cuba.

Just as the CIA escalated its efforts to penetrate Al Qaeda after 9/11, the DGI has devoted considerable resources to infiltrating hard-line anti-Castro organizations in Miami and monitoring the activities of Alvarez and other exile leaders with a track record of violence. In the mid-1990s Cuba sent more than a dozen operatives to Florida to establish a spy ring code-named the *Red de Obispos*—the Wasp Network. Most of the agents were assigned to penetrate groups such as the Cuban American National Foundation, Brothers to the Rescue and Alpha 66; one, Antonio Guerrero, was hired on as a sheet metal worker at the Boca Chica air base, where he took notes on the types of military aircraft landing and taking off and monitored the level of activity on the base.

In September 1998, the FBI moved in. Five agents—Guerrero, Fernando González, Gerardo Hernández, René González and Ramon Labañino—now known as the Cuban Five—were detained, thrown into solitary confinement for seventeen months, prosecuted for conspiracy to commit espionage (as there was no evidence they had gathered any classified US information) and given maximum sentences ranging from fifteen years to double life in prison. When a three-judge panel of the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals threw out their convictions in August 2005, issuing a unanimous decision that the Five had not received a fair trial, Attorney General Alberto Gonzales's office immediately appealed to the full Circuit Court to revisit the ruling.

Gonzales's concerted effort to keep the five Cuban spies in prison stands in sharp contrast to his inaction on keeping Posada behind bars. After being pardoned in Panama in August 2004, Posada snuck into the United States in March 2005 and requested political asylum; he was detained only after publicity on his terrorist background—much of it generated by declassified CIA and FBI documents posted on the website of my organization, the National Security Archive—threatened to undermine the Bush Administration's credibility in the "war on terror." But Gonzales has refused to certify Posada as a terrorist under the provisions of the Patriot Act—certification that would allow the government to detain him indefinitely. Instead, the Justice Department has treated Posada as just another illegal immigrant, charging him only with lying about how he arrived in the country.

With Posada indicted only on immigration fraud, his lawyers have, not surprisingly, convinced three different courts that he should be released. On April 19, he posted $350,000 in bail and returned to Miami. The man that the same Justice Department has described in court filings as "an unrepentant criminal and admitted mastermind of terrorist plots" will now live comfortably under house arrest until his trial, scheduled for May 11.

In Cuba, freeing the Five and keeping Posada in prison have become cause célèbres. The first thing travelers see upon arrival at José Martí International Airport outside Havana is a huge placard featuring photographs of the "heroes of the Republic of Cuba" and demanding "Freedom for the Cuban Five"; similar signs line the corridors of major hotels. Huge public rallies have been held to call for justice for Posada's many victims and to denounce US hypocrisy for releasing him to his wife's Miami home. Fidel Castro emerged from his convalescence to accuse the Bush Administration of freeing "a monster." The Five are frequently referred to as *presos políticos*—political prisoners.

In fact, the Five are better understood as counterterrorism agents whose goal was to protect Cubans and other innocent victims from the violence of committed terrorists like Luis Posada. The Bush Administration's handling of these two historically inseparable cases is a reminder that, when it comes to Cuba, US policy-makers refuse to recognize the difference between those who commit acts of terror and those seeking to counter them.

PETER KORNBLUH

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Most important, Raul has made it legitimate and even fashionable to start discussing the country's myriad everyday practical problems instead of staying focused on the more abstract themes of international relations, of which his older brother is so fond. There is hardly anyone in Cuba today who does not believe that there is an urgent need for substantial economic reforms that will begin to address the kinds of serious structural problems the country faces. As a very senior former government official who also describes himself as a Marxist put it to me recently, "The first thing this country needs is a lot more private property, more entrepreneurs, more decentralization, more small and medium-sized businesses." People like him are the rule, not the exception, and they fill the ranks of the party and the government. Their fear is that unless change comes soon, it will not be possible later on to manage it in an orderly fashion.

Peters: There is no doubt that Raul Castro has different ideas about the economy, although no one can tell how fast or how far he will carry reforms once he's in charge. My strong hunch is that Cubans would overwhelmingly welcome economic reforms that allow them to engage in enterprise, earn better wages and live in an economy with a single currency and affordable prices for their basic needs. But none of those changes would affect freedom to engage in dissent, free speech and free association. Human rights are in a different box, and I don't see any sign that Cuban authorities are considering improvements in that area.

And when Fidel comes back, as he has begun to do?

Peters: You know, it's wrong to paint this entirely as a Raul versus Fidel issue. Even before Fidel's illness, he and others started discussing some chronic problems—the young generation's lack of connection to the revolutionary project, the economic system that drives people into black-market activity—that threaten their ability to carry socialism into the next generation. Given a free hand, I think Fidel would respond with ideological exhortations and greater law enforcement, while Raul would look to fixing the system itself.

Coll: I actually think that none of the needed changes will happen as long as Fidel is alive or even actively involved in the management of the government.

Sánchez-Parodi: Although he delegated the exercise of his official functions, Fidel Castro has maintained his moral and political authority. When he resumes his official functions—which, incidentally, could take place in a few weeks—it will mean that he has made an extraordinary comeback.

Of course, we all realize that he will not be able to work endless hours or deliver six-hour speeches or micromanage every single important project, as was the case before. But the institutions created by the Revolution—the Communist Party, the People's Power Assemblies—have proven in this period to be capable of playing their roles in a new environment in which the leadership has to be more collective. In the future, as the historical leadership of the Revolution inevitably fades away, Cuba will see the kind of leadership that has functioned over the last eight months.

How does the Cuban government see the political changes in the Latin America region? What does the trend toward the populist left in the region mean for Cuba?

Landau: Cuban leaders see the election results in Venezuela, Bolivia, Nicaragua and Ecuador as confirming of their critique of capitalism and imperialism. Add to this the elections in Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil and Chile and you have what they feel is a confirmation that Fidel was right. They were patient, refused to get intimidated and now the old leaders are following events with renewed optimism.

LeoGrande: Certainly, the Cubans see the rise of the new left in Latin America as vindication of their longstanding argument that neoliberal economics is a dead-end development strategy. In decades past, Cuba has occasionally had ideological friends in the region—Allende in Chile, Manley in Jamaica, the Sandinistas in Nicaragua—but these allies were isolated and their governments were short-lived. The difference today is that socialist and left-populist governments are the dominant bloc in Latin America.

Peters: Economically, it means support from Venezuela and not a whole lot else. Politically, it makes for a less hostile, if not friendlier, neighborhood. It makes it impossible for the United States to organize a united hemispheric front against Castro, and when Castro goes it insures the same thing.

Coll: Not only does Cuba have very good relations with all of the new leftist governments in the region, including those on the so-called moderate left like Chile and Brazil. It also has excellent relations with such stalwart US allies as Colombia and Honduras. [Colombian] President [Álvaro] Uribe, Washington's strongest ally in the region, pointedly has turned to Castro several times for help in negotiating with some of the Colombian guerrilla groups and in lessening tensions with [Hugo] Chávez's Venezuela. And just a few weeks ago, Honduras, one of the United States' closest friends in Central America, decided to send an ambassador to Cuba for the first time since 1962. For the past several years, UN resolutions condemning the US embargo against Cuba have received the largest number of affirmative votes ever in favor of Cuba—with many of those votes coming from Latin America. And when Castro became ill last July the Latin Americans made it clear to Washington that they would not join any efforts at regime change.

Sánchez-Parodi: I believe that Latin America is experiencing important changes: The traditional political parties that defend the status quo have lost their influence and political power; the leaders of the military institutions have lost their capability to establish repressive regimes; the influence of the United States has deteriorated in the political arena as in the economic and trade areas because of its insistence on neoliberal schemes and, above all, popular organizations have increased their ability to mobilize people and have proven able to take power through elections. What we are witnessing in Latin America are revolutionary changes by different means—and an apogee of the relations between Cuba and the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean, both at the official and the popular levels.

How do you see Cuba's ties to Venezuela?

Sánchez-Parodi: In Venezuela a revolution is going on. No doubt about that. Chávez gained power in a different manner than Fidel, but the Cuban Revolution and the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela have the same strategic and historical goals.

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Relations between Venezuela and Cuba go beyond mere political rhetoric. There is an important economic dimension, as determined by the Cuba–Venezuela Intergovernmental Commission in February. We reached agreements to develop 355 bilateral projects—totaling $1.5 billion.

LeoGrande: Chávez certainly seems to regard Fidel as having blazed the trail for socialist development in Latin America.

Landau: Hugo Chávez is one of Fidel's sons. He, like Fidel, sees himself in the long line of revolutionaries beginning with Bolívar. The alliance is between two nations whose people are somewhat similar, especially those who descended from African slaves and colonizers. Cuban doctors and other medical professionals have served needs in Venezuela, and Chávez's investment in Cuba has helped the Cuban economy. It augurs well for Cuba's future, as does Chinese investment, which is relatively new.

Peters: Venezuela's support ended Cuba's foreign exchange crisis. There are other factors—tourism has recovered, nickel prices tripled last year—but Venezuelan oil is the most important. In Cuba, the result is fewer blackouts and some public investment in clinics and hospitals. But it's not clear that the Cuban public appreciates it; many family doctors have been uprooted for international missions, and Venezuela gets the blame.

Coll: Obviously, Venezuela plays a critical role in the Cuban economy today, not only through its oil sales but through its investments in the Cuban energy sector and purchases of Cuban services, all of which have contributed enormously to Cuba's strong economic performance over the last two years. It should be noted that while for Chávez this is an alliance of ideology, for the Cubans it is an alliance first of convenience. Many Cubans cannot help but suspect that the Chávez story will end up badly. This is one reason Cuba has brought in China, India, Norway and Spain to help it find oil in the Gulf of Mexico. This seems to them a wiser course than counting on Venezuela's largesse to continue forever.

Given the changes in the region, Cuba seems to have a new confidence in its perspective toward the United States. What does the Cuban government want from the United States, if anything?

Sánchez-Parodi: What Cuba wants in its relations with the United States is simple and straightforward: the requisite respect for our independence as a nation, our territorial integrity and the sovereign will of the Cuban people to decide on their own political, economic and social system. We see no other viable option but the normalization of official relations between both nations.

But it would require the United States to cease a number of hostile activities in which it is currently engaged: to stop encouraging, financing and organizing the so-called "dissidents" on the island and to put a stop to those in the exile community who continue to plan terrorist actions against Cuba. In the cause of countering terrorism, Cuba would welcome the release of the five Cubans jailed in the United States because of their vigilant investigation of those very exile groups in Florida that have supported campaigns of terror against the Cuban people [see Peter Kornbluh, "Terror and the Counterterrorists," page 20].

There are many areas of bilateral collaboration that could benefit both of our countries: The fight against drug traffickers, which is currently limited to ad hoc actions because of Washington's refusal to establish a permanent agreement with Cuba; ending the illegal trafficking of human beings, which is actually promoted by the Cuban Adjustment Act (which should be repealed), and the policy of accepting Cubans if they reach US shores (which should also be eliminated); increased contact between family members living in one or the other country, who are affected by visa difficulties and obstacles to communication; allowing for unrestricted scientific, cultural and sports exchanges, virtually nonexistent today as a result of travel restrictions imposed by Washington.

LeoGrande: I agree with Ramón: What Cuba wants from the United States today is what Cuba has wanted from the United States since January 1, 1959—a relationship of equality based on respect for Cuba's national sovereignty and independence, not a restoration of Washington's neocolonial dominance. Normal relations with the United States would benefit the Cuban economy tremendously, of course, and Raul Castro has said several times in recent months, most recently in a speech on December 2, that Cuba is willing to talk with Washington about improving relations. But Cuba has survived almost half a century in the face of US hostility, and as Fidel has often said, it can survive for decades more if necessary.

Peters: A few years ago, Cuba decided it had bigger fish to fry. From Cuba's point of view, the Bush Administration's position was clear, and Congress was not able to force a change in policy. So why not pay attention to relationships that pay political and economic dividends: China, Venezuela, the nonaligned movement, Cuba's worldwide medical diplomacy and so on.

Coll: Of course, Cuban officials would like to see the economic sanctions dropped, but they understand the US political system well enough to know that as long as Fidel is alive this is unlikely to happen, for reasons having to do not with the US national interest but with US domestic politics, mainly, the key place of Florida in presidential elections and the vital role still played in that state by the exile hard-liners. The Cubans, of course, continue to work for a lifting of the embargo, but they do this not because they expect the United States will respond positively but because in doing so they embarrass the Administration at the international level. And in the meantime, they are hoping, fairly confidently, that with the new investment from China and Venezuela and some success in oil exploration over the next three years, they will manage to do fine, or at least well enough to outlast yet another US Administration.

Landau: In many conversations I have had with Fidel since the 1970s, he has had the approach of "look at the map." The two countries are geographically fated. So, yes, the majority of the Central Committee sees an inevitable relationship. But Cuba has learned painfully that it can't give anything away. Reciprocity is the key to its diplomacy. Need is not the question after forty-eight-plus years of survival without US relations.

In 1960 I was at a forum in Havana where a US student posed this question to Che Guevara: "What would you like the US to do in your fondest dreams?"

"Disappear," said Che.

The student looked hurt.

"Hey," said Che. "I'm kidding!" ■

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About Your Professor

Professor Arthur T. Benjamin is Professor of Mathematics at Harvey Mudd College, where he has taught since 1989. He earned a B.Sc. from Carnegie Mellon University in 1983 and a Ph.D. in Mathematical Sciences from Johns Hopkins University in 1989. The Mathematical Association of America honored him with regional and national awards for distinguished teaching in 1999 and 2000 and named him the George Pólya Lecturer for 2006–08.

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CUBAN-AMERICAN MODERATES ARE ON THE RISE, BUT HARD-LINERS STILL CALL THE SHOTS.

Miami Vise

MAX J. CASTRO

I welcome the opportunity of having anyone assassinate Fidel Castro and any other leader that is oppressing the people.
—GOP Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, of Miami, interviewed in 2006 for the British documentary *638 Ways to Kill Castro*

Fidel Castro is dying. Or perhaps he is already dead. That, at least, was the rumor in Little Havana over the past several months, where reports that the health of the *comandante en jefe* was improving were treated with skepticism.

Premature predictions of Castro's death have been a mainstay of Miami's rumor mill since long before last July, when the Cuban government announced that the elder Castro had transferred power temporarily to his younger brother Raul. Cuban-Americans who first heard "news" of Castro's expiration in elementary school are now receiving their AARP cards. Countless Castro opponents who anticipated Fidel's death have preceded him to the grave.

The demise of Fidel Castro has been part of the Cuban exile imagination for a long time, as evidenced in such works as León Ichaso's 1996 film *Bitter Sugar*, which culminates in an abortive assassination attempt. That is especially the case for early 1960s and '70s exiles, among them Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and her parents, who consider themselves part of *el exilio histórico* (*el exilio histérico* to its critics). Identifying with this *exilio histórico* signifies a hard-line position as much as time of arrival. Upon hearing of Castro's serious illness, some of these exiles lamented the possibility that he might die of natural causes rather than being executed. "I would have liked to kill that man to set an example for future generations," said Orlando Bosch, the man many hold mainly responsible for the terrorist downing of a Cubana Airlines passenger plane in 1976, which killed seventy-three people, to a reporter last August, when asked whether he was "relieved or frustrated" that Castro was seriously ill. "The prospect that he will die in bed really upsets me."

WILLIAM EGGLESTON

What is really happening in the exile capital now that Castro no longer wields absolute power in Havana and his death might no longer be just wishful thinking but a real possibility?

After the round of noisy, if lightly attended, celebrations in Miami after the July 31 announcement of Castro's turnover of power, an eerie calm seems to have settled in. That is largely because an orderly succession in Cuba has already occurred. The popular uprising hoped for by many has not materialized.

"They are depressed. They are in shock," said Alfredo Durán, a veteran of the Bay of Pigs invasion and the former chair of the Florida Democratic Party. Durán, who has long advocated dialogue and an end to the embargo, was kicked out of the Bay of Pigs veterans' organization for his views. He says that hard-line exiles "never imagined that a transfer of power could take place while Castro is still alive. Now they don't have the slightest idea what to do."

Yet it would be wrong to mistake a temporary psychological setback for a definitive defeat or to underestimate the hard-liners' power, which has never been greater. It is true that the community has never been monolithic and that more recent arrivals and second- and third-generation Cuban-Americans hold more centrist attitudes on such topics as the embargo and

Max J. Castro, a sociologist and bilingual columnist, is a founding member of the Emergency Network of Cuban-American Scholars and Artists and a co-author of This Land Is Our Land: Immigrants and Power in Miami.

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travel to the island; but the conclusion many have derived from these facts—that the Cuban-American community is moving toward political moderation—is at best only half right.

The truth is there are two contradictory trends in the US Cuban community: one involving people, the other grounded in power. The people curve indeed arcs toward the center, but it is long and slow. The power curve has been moving swiftly in the opposite direction. The moderates are growing in number, and their voice is louder today than when dissent in Miami was met with bombs. But meanwhile, the hard-liners have been accumulating power and driving US Cuba policy further right, with a major assist from a President who believes in using US power to change regimes and export democracy. While the Cuban-American community as a whole is slowly drifting toward moderation, its hard-line political elite has become entrenched in the most powerful American institutions.

The best case for growing moderation comes from surveys like the one last September of 600 Cubans and Cuban-Americans in Miami-Dade and Broward counties, conducted by Bendixen & Associates for the New Democrat Network. The poll found, for example, that 77 percent of Cuban-Americans in South Florida prefer a transition to democracy that is "gradual without violence" as opposed to 20 percent who support "fast and violent" change. Some 49 percent favor free travel to Cuba, while 45 percent oppose it.

The Bush Administration, in response to howls from the hard-liners, clamped down on travel to Cuba just before the 2004 election.

That latter attitude stands in contradiction to the policy of the Bush Administration, which in response to howls from the hard-liners that Bush was not doing enough about Cuba clamped down on travel to the island just before the 2004 election. Most egregious of all, the new rules included draconian limits on travel by Cuban-Americans to one trip every three years with no humanitarian exceptions. The previous policy, in force during Clinton's presidency and most of Bush's first term, allowed a yearly visit and humanitarian exceptions. Bush's travel policy thus is more hard-line than the views of the Cuban community itself, and no one is hurt more than Cubans in the United States with close relatives on the island.

What explains the persistence of such a pernicious and increasingly unpopular policy? A Florida International University survey of a random sample of 1,000 Cuban-Americans in Miami-Dade County released April 2 provides the answer. It shows, among other things, just how sharp the divisions are between the old guard, on one hand, and the new arrivals and the second generation, on the other.

The starkest differences are on the crucial issue of the travel ban, arguably the linchpin of the embargo. In the poll, free travel to Cuba is favored by a majority of the Miami Cuban-American population (55 percent), by a larger majority of the second generation (57 percent) and by an overwhelming proportion of those who have arrived from Cuba since 1995 (80 percent). In contrast, only 23 percent of those who arrived between 1959 and 1965 favor free travel.

Generational change and continuing immigration point toward a future of increasing moderation. But the power equation at the moment is another matter.

In the Cuban-American community today, the *históricos* hold nearly all the positions of power and influence, from political offices to university presidencies to partnerships in major law firms. They own major businesses; control or influence a great deal of the local media, including radio, TV and newspapers; and sit on key civic boards. They are US citizens, they register and they vote. They are responsible for nearly all the community's campaign contributions. It is their views that count. They are now a demographic minority—but a political majority. Note, for example, these data from the March survey:

Opinion on allowing unrestricted travel to Cuba, by percent:

	Favor	Oppose
Total	55.2	44.8
Registered to vote	42.3	57.7
Not registered to vote	73.9	26.1

The *históricos*, like the generation who founded the Cuban Revolution, may be losing the long war against biology. For now, though, they—and the rightward-thinking among their children—have been winning the recent battles for power and policy, succeeding not only in preventing a relaxation of the embargo but in making US Cuba policy much harsher than it would otherwise have been, at no small cost to a large sector of their own people.

The most significant obstacles to changing US Cuba policy in South Florida today—what we might call the Miami vise—are not the old warriors like Orlando Bosch. It's more the likes of Modesto Maidique, president of Florida International University, who on February 28 published a column in *El Nuevo Herald* opposing any change in current US policy and pledging that the university would work to bring about the "final goal," meaning regime change in Cuba. In a stinging response in the same publication March 3, Lisandro Pérez, a professor of sociology at the university and the founding director of the Cuban Research Institute, wondered how Maidique could support a policy that causes pain to Cuban families and hampers academic research. The episode highlights both the diversity of thought in the exile community and the asymmetry of power. Today it is possible to air both views in Miami without fear of physical retaliation. But in terms of clout there's no contest. Maidique is received at the White House and is considered one of the most powerful men in Miami; Pérez is a nationally respected scholar whose influence is confined mainly to the academic sphere.

The roster of Cuban-Americans in Congress is a testament to the growing empowerment of the Cuban-American community in general and of the *históricos* specifically. In 1988 there were no Cuban-Americans in Congress. Today there are six, including two senators. While there is one senator for every 3 million people in this country, there is one Cuban-American senator for every 750,000 Cuban-Americans! Legislative over-representation is just one sign of the disproportionate power of the Cuban-American community, which has focused that power like a laser on one

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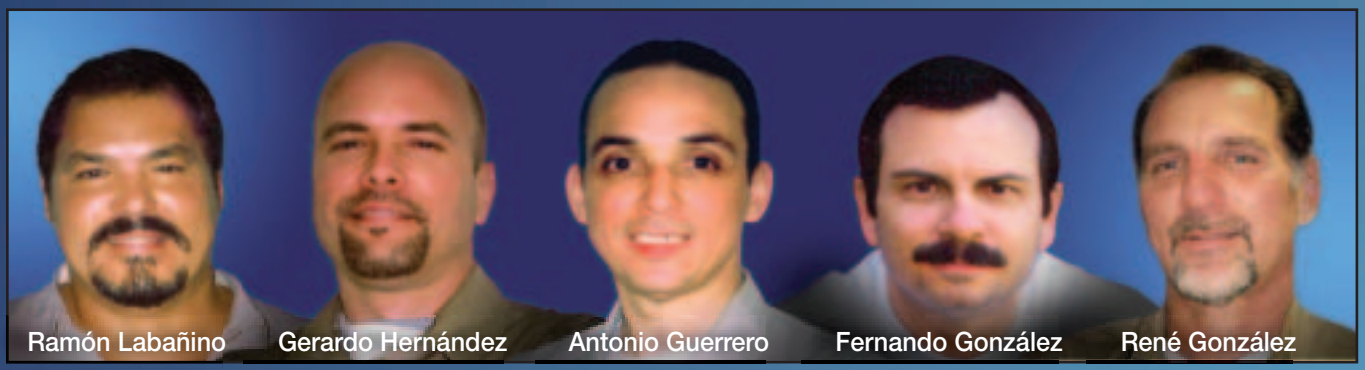
Q: Can you be imprisoned in the United States for opposing terrorism?

A: Yes, if you oppose terrorism in Miami.



Why does the Bush administration harbor anti-Cuba terrorist Luis Posada Carriles, while it imprisons the very men — the Cuban Five — who saved Cuban and American lives from terrorists like Posada, terrorists who operate with impunity in Miami?

The answer lies in the 47-year U.S. policy of hostility towards Cuba, which includes CIA and FBI backing for Cuban exile extremist groups in Miami.

For more than 40 years, anti-Cuba terrorist organizations in Miami have engaged in countless bombings and sabotage against Cuba, and against anyone who calls for normal relations between the U.S. and Cuba.

More than 3,400 Cubans and others have died as a result of these terrorists' attacks.

In the early 1990s, with the U.S. refusing to apprehend the terrorists, Cuba sent the Five to Miami to infiltrate those groups and monitor their actions.

The Five successfully stopped many plots. Cuban and American lives were saved.

Incredibly, after Cuba provided evidence of terrorist plots to the U.S., on Sept. 12, 1998 the FBI arrested not the terrorists but the Cuban Five! They were falsely charged with espionage, conspiracy and other crimes. The prosecution admitted that no evidence of espionage existed. Despite numerous defense motions for trial outside Miami — a city rife with anti-Cuba prejudice — the judge refused. The Five were convicted in 2001 and sentenced to four life terms and 77 years collectively.

In Aug. 2005 the 11th Circuit Court three-judge panel unanimously overturned the Five's convictions and ordered a new trial. But after Alberto Gonzales' direct intervention on the government's behalf, the 11th Circuit full panel set aside the 3-judge panel opinion and confirmed the Five's convictions.

The Cuban Five await a decision on their latest appeals, while in the United States and worldwide, over 300 committees campaign for their freedom.

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The **National Committee to Free the Cuban Five** was formed in June 2001 to raise public awareness in the United States of the unjust arrest, trial and conviction of the Cuban Five: **Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González** and **René González.** We work to break through the media "blockade" on the case through public events, law school forums, press conferences, petition campaigns, and lobbying. Contact us to get involved! Please make a donation today!

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target: maintaining a hard-line US Cuba policy.

Indeed, while the six Cuban-Americans in Congress are not monolithic in party or ideology—two are liberal Democrats; four are conservative Republicans—they are when it comes to supporting an unyielding Cuba policy. Not surprisingly, they are also all *históricos* by birth, inheritance or adoption. New Jersey Senator Bob Menendez, born here of Cuban parents who immigrated before 1959, might be considered the exception. But Menendez rose to power representing a heavily Cuban-American area of New Jersey, home to many *históricos*, some extreme hard-liners. On his trips to Miami he is greeted as an honorary *histórico* and receives tens of thousands of dollars in political contributions.

For nearly two decades, since the founding of the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) in 1981 at the start of the Reagan Administration, that organization led the cause of maintaining and even strengthening the embargo, a campaign fueled by abundant contributions and tough lobbying. But the death of CANF founder Jorge Mas Canosa ten years ago left hard-liners bereft of their most effective leader and began CANF's decline. A second blow was the Elián González affair in 1999–2000—the effort to prevent a little boy from returning to Cuba to live with his father that took on the feel of a religious craze in parts of the Miami Cuban community and became a public relations disaster for hard-liners. It split CANF into warring camps and exposed the broader public, for the first time, to strains of Cuban-American fanaticism with which Miami residents had long been familiar. The outcome—the raid, the legal process and Elián's return to Cuba—left hard-liners defeated and embittered.

In Washington it appeared as if the hard-liners' viselike grip on Cuba policy had been broken and that the *históricos* and their friends in Congress would be overwhelmed by the tide of sentiment running against them. Spearheaded by the bipartisan Cuba Working Group in the House, led by Arizona Republican Jeff Flake and Massachusetts Democrat William Delahunt, both houses of Congress voted two years in a row, in 2002 and 2003, to gut the travel ban. But President Bush saved the hard-liners' skin by threatening a veto each time. He was helped by Tom DeLay and other Republicans in Congress, who worked furiously using dubious procedural maneuvers to prevent anti-embargo legislation from reaching the President's desk.

Spared to fight another day, their policies intact, the hard-liners regrouped and mounted a counterattack. Their vehicle this time was the new US-Cuba Democracy PAC, led by Mauricio Claver-Carone, a young Cuban-American graduate of Georgetown Law School. The PAC is fueled by tons of *histórico* money, most of it from Miami, and has used its dollars extremely effectively on behalf of a relentlessly hard-line agenda. The PAC's web page reports that the group contributed more than $550,000 to more than 200 federal candidates in the 2005–06 election cycle alone, making the PAC the second-largest Florida contributor to Congressional campaigns during that time. Federal Elections Commission figures confirm the PAC's fundraising prowess. The Washington–based Latin American Working Group has documented many cases where members of Congress who had earlier voted to ease travel restrictions changed their vote in 2004 after receiving contributions from the PAC.

The resilience and resourcefulness of Cuban-American hard-liners show they should not be dismissed prematurely; but they are not invincible. Political winds in the country and in the Cuban community itself are running against them. DeLay is gone. So is Jeb Bush, who as governor of Florida championed the hard-line cause so faithfully that Senator Mel Martinez called him the "first Cuban-American governor." George W. Bush is a lame duck. The Democrats control Congress. Several new bills have already been introduced to ease aspects of the embargo. Four years in Iraq have shown regime change to be a disastrous policy. The majority of Americans—62 percent according to a recent poll—support re-establishing diplomatic relations with Cuba.

Tom DeLay worked furiously using dubious procedural maneuvers to prevent anti-embargo legislation from reaching Bush's desk.

In the Cuban-American community, the cruel nature of recent travel restrictions has spurred the formation of new organizations to fight for change, including the Cuban-American Commission for Family Rights and the Emergency Network of Cuban-American Scholars and Artists. Dissidents in Cuba have also called for an end to the restrictions on family travel and remittances.

This call was echoed—belatedly—by a coalition of Cuban-American organizations, including the formerly hard-line CANF. This new coalition, known as Consenso Cubano, also includes the Cuba Study Group, an organization of Cuban-American business heavyweights formed after the Elián debacle to provide alternative leadership to CANF.

The Cuba Study Group, probably the most powerful player in Consenso, casts itself as moderate because it calls for ending restrictions on Cuban-American travel, even as it supports continuing the embargo and the broader travel ban. Thus, while the emergence of the Cuba Study Group does reflect divisions in the traditional exile camp, its claim to represent a new, more progressive exile approach rings hollow. Instead, its strategy appears to be fourfold: (a) to give the appearance of maximum moderation in order to avoid being dismissed as extreme, thus retaining the ability to influence Cuba policy in Washington regardless of the party in power; (b) to support travel by Cuban-Americans as a way to attract a different base from that of the *históricos*, including younger people and more recent immigrants, to have a means for destabilizing the Cuban government and to have a presence on the ground in case of a collapse of the regime; (c) to take the wind out of the sails of broader efforts by liberal groups to end the travel ban and the embargo; and (d) to prevent a normalization of US-Cuba economic and diplomatic relations that could lead to an economic resurgence in Cuba on the Chinese or Vietnamese model, leaving the exiles out of the picture in terms of political influence and economic dominance on the island.

It has often been claimed that US Cuba policy reflects the attitudes of the Cuban-American community. The truth is that current US policy corresponds solely to the views of a rich, entrenched, recalcitrant and demographically dwindling minority of that community.

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Because Florida is both rich in Electoral College votes and a swing state, this shrinking minority within a minority has exercised a virtual veto against presidential initiatives for improving US relations with Cuba. The 2000 election showed that 571 votes can turn an election, or at least turn it over to the Supreme Court to do with it what it will.

Yet there is a market in the state, including in the Cuban-American community, for a candidate with the guts to stand up to the hard-liners. Those who espouse a militant line toward Cuba are disliked by many in the state because of their myriad and well-publicized instances of intolerance. The hard-line policy is unpopular with virtually every group in Florida, including business interests and the rapidly increasing non-Cuban Latino population, which already outnumbers the Cubans. It is past time for a national leader with the courage to make the stranglehold of the *históricos* history. ■

Ferdinand VII

Although political revolutions are traditionally grim affairs for those who lose, the winners are faced with the embarrassments of victors who must make clear just who it was they had overthrown and to what end. The tone of the victors is usually solemn if not megalomaniacal as they celebrate with statues and other monuments a whole new world "upside down," according to the lyric of a song popular at the time of the United States' successful revolution to separate itself from the British Empire as personified by England's King George III, whose villainous twenty-eight acts against his American colonists were itemized in fury by Thomas Jefferson, author of that now sacred document: the Declaration of Independence. We have since learned that the wicked king was, much of the time, clinically insane, but that excuse, if known at the time, would have only further convinced his American subjects that the divine right of kings, whom their ancestors had worshiped and obeyed, was at an end and we were at last a free and sovereign republic.

ALINA GUERRA DÍAZ

Since the Cuban Revolution of 1959 is everywhere honored on the island of Cuba (as opposed to on a nearby peninsula irritably attached to the North American continent), one is startled to find on display in present-day Havana an elegant marble statue of King Ferdinand VII. Even successive governments of Spain have removed all statues and memorials to him from Spain. Question: Whose astonishing wit and wisdom was it to preserve in Spain's most beautiful colony the effigy of a man condemned by a Spanish historian as not "an evil man; he was a monster"? It is not possible to discern the intentions of the members of Cuba's First Congress in 1975, but we do know that when, on May 8, 1975, they installed a statue of the republic's founding father, Carlos Manuel de Céspedes y del Castillo, in Ferdinand's place, they chose to retain, in the same square, the statue of the hated king, its base duly inscribed FERDINANDUS VII REX POPULO HABANENSI CLARISSIMO IMAGINE CORDE PERPETUO ADESSE VOIVIT ANNO MDCCCXXXIIII. I like to think that those who wanted to preserve the image of this worst of Spanish kings who had sold his kingdom out to Napoleon's French Empire at a delicate moment in Europe's history were being cautionary. In any case, this last of a line of absolute monarchs did not himself survive the new age of Bolívar and the South American wars of independence, which politically liberated the Hispanic-Portuguese states of the Western Hemisphere. Charles Merewether in his meditation "The Rise and Fall of Monuments" (*Grand Street*, Number 68) paraphrases French historian Louis Marin's *The Power of the Image*, where he suggests that "the power of a portrait of a king or emperor gains its authority from living beyond its subject. It assumes authority from that subject, as if it has overcome death. It is this uncanny power, this force that haunts those who live, that people try to destroy." Or, in the case of the evil king, preserve as a remembrance of an era that is over and done with, leaving behind a *memento mori* that suggests to the living the dangers inherent always for any nation that aligns itself like a lamb with a lion—to an expanding empire like that of Napoleon. In imitation of the preservers of King Ferdinand's betrayal of his subjects, I suggest that in the American republic cum empire to the north we establish a monument to King George III, listing, as Jefferson once did, his own numerous crimes against his subjects.

GORE VIDAL

Gore Vidal's most recent book is Point to Point Navigation: A Memoir.

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WILLIAM EGGLESTON

Watching the Reporters

JOHN DINGES

Fidel Castro seldom mentions the foreign press, and even more rarely praises its work. But in 2005, as anti-Castro terrorist Luis Posada Carriles surfaced in Miami, Fidel went on television and read out loud a story from the *Chicago Tribune*. He liked the story, and liked it even better when he flipped back to the byline and discovered the reporter's name.

"In reality, I give thanks to the reporter, Gary Ma—" Fidel hesitated. Then he continued with surprise in his voice. "His name is Marx! *Compadre*, even more respect for the reporter. His name is Gary Marx, and in reality this newspaper is an organ that at least tries to say some things."

That was then. Two months ago, Marx was called into the Cuban International Press Center (CPI) and told his five-year stint as a correspondent in Cuba had come to an end. "The bottom line was basically this," Marx told me. "[CPI director José Luis Ponce] said to me, 'This is nothing personal, this is business. Our overseas image is very important to us. We weighed your positive stories against your negative stories. There are too many negative stories. We think we can do better with someone else.'"

Just like that. Marx's expired accreditation would not be renewed, and as of that moment he could no longer write about Cuba. No specific stories were mentioned, although Marx had sensed he was in trouble for some time as it became harder and harder to get interviews with Cuban officials.

"They were very nice about it," he said. He wasn't being expelled. He could stay in Cuba until his visa expires in June, and his two children would be able to finish the school year.

Just as Marx was politely muzzled, the BBC's Stephen Gibbs and a freelancer for the Mexican newspaper *El Universal*, César González Calero, were also told they no longer had credentials to work as journalists in Cuba. Their stories were likewise too negative; González Calero was told his reporting was "not the most convenient for the Cuban government."

The question is, Why now? Cuba's domestic media have always been tightly controlled by the government and the Communist Party. In 2003 there was a draconian crackdown. Seventy-five dissident writers and intellectuals, some of whom were trying to create *samizdat* newsletters with firsthand reports from inside Cuba, were imprisoned with sentences of up to twenty-seven years.

But reporting by foreign correspondents has been encouraged in recent years. Starting in the late 1990s, for the first time in decades, four US news organizations were allowed to open

John Dinges has been writing for many years on Latin America. His latest book is The Condor Years: How Pinochet and His Allies Brought Terrorism to Three Continents.

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bureaus in Cuba: CNN and the AP, as well as two Tribune Company newspapers, the *Chicago Tribune* and the *South Florida Sun Sentinel*. The Cuban government seemed to see coverage from inside the country as an antidote to the relentless attacks on it by the US government, especially the Bush Administration. With Fidel's illness and the prospect that Cuba is on the eve of historic change, Cuba is again a big story, and news organizations are jockeying to be in position to cover the transition from Fidel to what comes after.

Reading Gary Marx's voluminous catalogue of stories from his five years living and writing in Cuba, one is struck—as Fidel once was—that this is a tremendously thorough journalist who not only understands a lot about Cuba but has a good deal of affection for the country.

There are negative stories, to be sure—but no cheap shots or the kind of condescension that characterizes much of public comment about Cuba in US political and media circles. His stories about the plight of the imprisoned dissidents and the struggling pro-democracy movement probably irritated the government. His poignant tales of Cubans obsessed with escaping the island and medical doctors lured into defection by US government enticements painted unfavorable but hardly new images of discontent. In the bulk of his reporting, Marx analyzed with authority the evolving changes inside the government since Fidel stepped aside in favor of his brother Raul.

Some of Marx's strongest work was a series of almost a dozen reports a year ago on the lavishly financed but ham-handed US propaganda efforts to promote regime change in Cuba. He documented the midnight distribution in Havana neighborhoods of pamphlets with translations of a speech by President Bush and the elaborate effort to smuggle into Cuba DVD recordings of pro-US television programs—pointing out that DVD players are all but nonexistent on the island. Tens of millions of dollars were wasted, he wrote, based on a Government Accountability Office report, on no-bid contracts for anti-Castro groups in Miami and to buy items—Sony PlayStations, cashmere sweaters and Godiva chocolates—presumably to be smuggled into Cuba.

"Gary Marx is a very balanced reporter," said Marie Sanz, Agence France-Presse's correspondent for four years in Havana. "He went everywhere on the island. He's not an arrogant American. He is unusual in that he is full of empathy for the Cuban common man." That depth of reporting may be part of the problem. Sanz says the Cuban government may prefer neophytes—she calls them "starry-eyed reporters"—who haven't had a chance to develop the kinds of sources correspondents like Marx have accumulated over the years.

In a closed society like Cuba, a correspondent's longevity can translate into the ability to penetrate otherwise inaccessible realms of society. That's going to be indispensable when the coverage of the so-called "transition" begins in earnest. "It takes years to win people's trust, to get them to open up," Marx said. "In terms of a public dialogue about the future, there is none. The private dialogue is what I tried to get at in my stories, and the only way to do that is by living here and getting to know people and winning their trust."

Marx and his wife, Cecilia Vaisman—a radio journalist specializing in documentaries on Latin America—have made Cuba

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a home for themselves and their two children, ages 8 and 10. "My kids grew up in Cuba," he said. "It is an incredible country and I have come to love the place—the people, the culture. They are very open in some ways. Obviously, in other ways it is an incredibly closed society; there is a tremendous amount of fear here. I have very, very mixed feelings."

Marx emphasized that he remains on cordial terms with Cuban officials, as have the other two correspondents. Reporter González Calero is expected to continue living in Cuba despite the ban on his reporting, and in late April the BBC negotiated for its correspondent, Gibbs, to continue working through June.

It is hard, then, to fathom the rationale for the Cuban actions. It likely has more to do with creating leverage over other foreign correspondents than with the reporters' "negative" coverage.

"I'm not sure what their motives were," Marx said. "I think they basically felt the hit they took in the short term is probably worth the benefit of sending a shot across the bow to all the remaining correspondents in Cuba: 'If you want to be here for the big day when Fidel goes and witness whatever transition takes place, you better be careful.'"

In the meantime, reporters are on a tight leash. Credentials, when they are granted, are short-term—for as little as thirty days—and the press office is constantly reviewing reporters' stories. Most foreign correspondents I know will try to resist that kind of pressure, however, and stop short of self-censorship. They will write the story as they see it and—as Marx has done—take the consequences. But the pressure undeniably has an effect.

Absent from the Cuban calculus seems to be any sense that a more open atmosphere for public conversation about Cuba's future—either inside or outside the island—might help lay the groundwork for whatever comes next. There are many intellectuals in Cuba, one of the most highly educated countries in Latin America; but government actions in recent years have sent a signal that debate among them is dangerous.

Nor does the government seem overly concerned about its eroding support among intellectuals elsewhere in Latin America, where Fidel and Cuba have long enjoyed adulatory status. The turning point for many was that 2003 roundup of dissidents, among them Raul Rivero, a journalist with indisputable bona fides as *Prensa Latina*'s former correspondent in Moscow.

Rivero was released for health reasons and now lives and writes in Spain. But according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, there are still twenty-four "independent journalists" behind bars. That total gives Cuba the dubious distinction of being "one of the leading jailers of journalists in the world, second only to China," CPJ director Joel Simon wrote in a letter to Raul Castro appealing for their release. An earlier letter from CPJ, to Fidel Castro, was co-signed by 107 prominent journalists and intellectuals from nineteen Latin American countries.

Those arrests and the Cuban government's latest actions might seem counterproductive, making it more difficult to mount a credible defense of Cuba in world public opinion and in its long-running battle with the United States. But some who know the country well, like Marie Sanz, have a grudging respect for the realpolitik of the Cuban government.

"The Cubans should never be underestimated in this propaganda war," she said. "They know what the foreign press wants and how it works. They play hardball." ■

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LA COLMENITA PERFORMS AROUND THE GLOBE BUT RARELY IN THE UNITED STATES.

A Dangerous Little Beehive?

ROSA MIRIAM ELIZALDE

Havana

The stage is nearly bare but suggests a dark attic in London where four mice wearing impeccable gray suits are retelling the story of Cinderella. They stay largely faithful to Charles Perrault's original plot, but we learn that the narrators—John, Paul, George and Ringo—grew up in Liverpool, love music and, when they call for help, they do so with the cry, "Help, I need somebody!" When Cinderella feels sad and forgotten in her vast, empty house, the Fab Four appear and one of them sings, "Ah, look at all the lonely people!"

JUVENTUD REBELDE

The actors, whose ages range between 6 and 14, play their own instruments, often incorporating the lively rhythms of the Caribbean into familiar Beatles songs. They live in Havana and speak Spanish, but these children will perform the play entirely in English wherever they can. In recent years their company, La Colmenita (the little beehive), has appeared at some of the most important children's theater festivals in the world: the World Festival of Children's Theater, in Germany; the Hans Christian Andersen Children's Theatre Festival, in Denmark; the International Festival at the Auditórium Cervantes, in Madrid; the International Festival of Music and Folk Dance, near Granada; as well as at dozens of other venues in Latin America, Asia and Europe. They regularly tour Cuba from one end of the island to the other; between performing other works from their wide repertory, they are preparing to premier *Cinderella* before a Beatles-crazed Havana audience.

The one place they will not be performing is the United States. "US law makes it next to impossible for Cuban artists, regardless of age, to enter the United States to perform," explains Carlos Alberto Cremata, the 46-year-old director of La Colmenita, the largest children's theater group in Cuba. In accordance with the Immigration and Nationality Act—which authorizes the State Department to stop people whose entry would be "detrimental to the interests of the United States"—the US Consulate in Havana routinely denies visas to Cuban artists and academics. In 2004 George W. Bush increased the number of sanctions imposed on Cuba, and almost all artistic and cultural exchanges are now effectively banned. In 2004 the US government even refused a visa to Ibrahim Ferrer of the Grammy award–winning Buena Vista Social Club.

Recent American visitors to Cuba, including Danny Glover, Harry and Julie Belafonte, several senators and other well-known public figures—some of whom prefer to remain anonymous, fearing reprisals from the Bush Administration—have expressed interest in supporting and financing a US tour by La Colmenita. The company has been invited to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry's annual meeting and to New York City's Shakespeare in the Park, where they were to stage a bilingual version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. "We haven't even started applying for visas," says Cremata, who is known in the Cuban theater world as Tin. "Every time the promoters try to organize a tour, they come up against a brick wall."

La Colmenita has its roots in La Colmena, a theater group founded and directed by Cremata in 1990 and made up of a dozen or so enthusiastic young amateurs, most of them former athletes and university students with little or no artistic experience. Cremata had studied at Havana's Instituto Superior de Arte de Cuba and later worked as a scriptwriter on the popular Cuban children's television series *Cuando yo sea grande* (when I grow up), which was directed by one of Cuba's best-known TV directors, Iraida Malberti, who also happens to be his mother. Generations of the Cremata-Malberti family have devoted themselves to the dramatic arts. Tin's younger brother is an actor, and another brother is a celebrated filmmaker. But, says Tin, "the man who inspired us all was my father. He used to put on plays at home and in our barrio with the participation of our family and neighbors." The father, Carlos Cramata Trujillo, died October 6, 1976, on a plane bound for Cuba from Venezuela carrying seventy-three passengers, including a 9-year-old girl. As the plane was flying over Barbados, two bombs exploded on board. One of the masterminds of this atrocity was Luis Posada Carriles, a Cuban-born Venezuelan referred to by many as "the bin Laden of Latin America." Posada has recently been released from jail in Texas, where he had been charged only with immigration violations, despite the Venezuelan government's demands for his extradition or for his prosecution in the United States as a terrorist. "We were totally devastated, but we were determined not to give in to hatred," Cremata says. "Theater became my resurrection."

The year Cremata helped establish La Colmena also saw the start of Cuba's so-called "special period"—the economic program intended to address the devastating impact of the collapse of the Socialist bloc in Europe and the intensification of the US blockade. The members of La Colmena would bicycle to working-class neighborhoods around the capital and to rural areas outside

Rosa Miriam Elizalde, who was born in Sancti Spiritus, Cuba, is a columnist for the Cuban newspaper Juventud Rebelde *and author of several books, including most recently* Chávez Nuestro. *She has twice won the Juan Gualberto Gómez Prize, Cuba's most prestigious journalism award.*

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Havana, carrying with them their costumes and props for works by Tirso de Molina, Lope de Vega and Shakespeare. They performed Cuban plays as well as the classics of Spanish and English theater in small municipal parks, and because of the power outages that were rife at the time, they used rudimentary kerosene lamps that lent the stage a strange, spectral light.

Cremata's experience with *Cuando yo sea grande* led directly to the formation of La Colmenita. In 1994 the company produced its first show, *Meñique*, by "Cuba's national hero," nineteenth-century poet José Martí. The cast were the children of members of La Colmena and child actors from *Cuando yo sea grande*. There were few resources, so the families made their own scenery and costumes with the help of the children. They had no recording studio, so they constructed one themselves lined with cardboard egg cartons. Today, whether they are performing *Meñique* or *Cinderella*, "Cubanized" versions of Hans Christian Andersen stories or a folkloric Caribbean piece titled *La Cucarachita Martina* (Martina, the little cockroach), the wardrobe is always the work of the "weaver bees," the mothers and grandmothers, who use old clothes to make costumes that transform the actors into rabbits, dogs, cats, exotic birds, butterflies or other tropical creatures. "At first, we did this because we had nothing," says Cremata, "but now it's become part of our methodology."

When they performed a Spanish version of *Alice in Wonderland*, set in present-day Cuba and featuring Cuban dance and music, at the World Festival of Children's Theater in Lingen, Germany, in 2002, Elisabeth Tondera of the *Lingen Journal* was astonished by this new Alice. It was the first time she had seen the role played by a black girl, Sahilys Cisneros Torres, who appeared on stage surrounded by, in Tondera's words, "all kinds of fantastic creatures and strange beings who stride across the stage on stilts." She continued, "The sheer dynamism of the acting, the clear staging, the bubbling comedy and infectious enthusiasm make the production a real theatrical experience."

Since April 2005, La Colmenita has had its own theater, the Teatro de la Orden Tercera, in the west wing of the Convento de San Francisco de Asis, an imposing seventeenth-century building in the heart of Old Havana. There, at what Cremata calls "central headquarters," eighty-five children form several groups, enabling them to have many plays in repertory at any one time while keeping up with rehearsals for *Cinderella*. But the company itself is much bigger than that. More than 5,000 children and 200 teachers have so far passed through eleven Colmenita chapters in three of Cuba's provinces. Taking part in the productions are children with physical handicaps, children who have visual or auditory problems and children with Down's syndrome, cancer, learning difficulties or cerebral palsy.

Bertha Martínez, an actress, a teacher at the Instituto Superior de Arte and winner of the Premio Nacional de Teatro, believes that La Colmenita has had a real impact on the larger world of Cuban theater. "It's the actors' sense of artistic solidarity, the evident care taken by all participants to find solutions to problems," she says. "Above all, it's the conscious awareness that each performance is a group enterprise and not just an opportunity for one person to shine."

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Cremata explains that two words are key for the company: *family* (necessary in order to live) and *play* (necessary in order to create). "When people come to the theater and look up, we want them to see that the lighting technician has a child beside him and the sound technician too," he says. "That way, the company will be like a great big bubble that the children can truly inhabit."

"I've belonged to the group since I was 3," says 14-year-old Malú Tarrau Broche. She plays one of the mice in *Cinderella* and was a star of the film *Viva Cuba*, directed by Tin's brother, Juan Carlos. She is also the youngest person in the history of Cuban cinema to receive a prize for best actress in an international competition, which she won at the 2006 Chemnitz Festival in Germany. "La Colmenita has been like a family to me," she says. "It's been a really happy, unforgettable period of my life. I spend more time here than I do at home."

La Colmenita actually managed to visit the United States once. Following an invitation by Global Exchange in 2002 to perform in California, the company spent a year of intense work collecting funds and coordinating theaters, hotels and travel agents. But eventually they were faced with the fact that the tour, which had initially been organized for January 2003, would have to be canceled or postponed indefinitely. The State Department had simply created too many bureaucratic obstacles and failed to issue the necessary travel permits to the company members and accompanying adults in time. Fifty percent of the cast were children with disabilities, four in wheelchairs. From the start, US authorities refused to allow entry to any of the children's relatives or to any of the Cuban educational or medical personnel because, they said, the children would be able to find the help they needed in the United States. As a result of the delays, the tour sponsors lost hundreds of thousands of dollars.

In a press release at the time, a frustrated Ana Pérez, then director of Global Exchange's Cuba program, exclaimed, "The group consists of children, the director, the producer and other members of a group who put on performances of Cuban folk tales and works by Shakespeare. How can they possibly be a threat to our national security? These actors are not terrorists."

On March 6, just three hours before the company's flight was scheduled to depart Havana for Los Angeles, a limited number of visas were finally issued. Of the twelve adults who were to accompany the twenty-three children, only eight received visas. Among those who were refused was Ingrid León Vila, the assistant director and a former teacher at the Solidarity With Panama School for Disabled Children. The US Consulate said that if the director was going, then there was no need for an assistant director. The authorities knew perfectly well that she would also be going in her capacity as nurse to Mabel Cedeño, who was playing the main role in *La Cucarachita Martina* and who suffers from a grave congenital illness—osteogenesis imperfecta, also known as brittle-bone disease—and needs specialized care. Since Ingrid could not go and care for her, Mabel could not go either.

Once in the United States, the troupe played to packed houses. A resolution passed by the California State Senate thanked La Colmenita, "the first Cuban children's theatre to visit the United States in forty-five years," saying that the children had acted as "good-will ambassadors between the two countries" through an exchange program that aims to help prevent "juvenile violence and other social problems in California." Carlos Alberto Cremata was particularly touched that Cuban children who live on either side of the Florida Straits were able to perform together. Four Cuban children who had emigrated with their parents and who had been members of La Colmenita in Havana were able to join the group for some of its performances. They have never met since. La Colmenita has never been back.

"We haven't given up hope of returning," says Cremata. "Along with our US and Canadian friends we are preparing a major event in the summer. Guess where? In Niagara Falls, Canada—right on the United States border." ■

Translated from the Spanish by Margaret Jull Costa.

LETTERS
CONTINUED

(Continued From Page 2)
tion," then unfortunately politics, like human nature, must be full of contradictions.

As for the bizarre claim that I accused Hariri of "murder," *mujrim* means "criminal" in Arabic, not murderer. Whether Hariri bears any responsibility for the thirteen people Solidere crushed to death is a legal and philosophical question, not to mention a moral one; but to allege that I charged him with murder is quite simply a misrepresentation—or a misunderstanding—of the facts. (The suggestion that I am trying to justify his murder by "the Shiites" is an even more alarming misinterpretation.)

To imply that criticism of Hariri constitutes an attempt to "justify" his murder is to follow the kind of totalitarian logic I might expect from his killers themselves. It equates critical examination of one's leaders—a cornerstone of democracy—with murder. And it proves my point exactly, which is that Hariri evolved into a leader who commanded unthinking, unquestioning loyalty, regardless of his actions—the quintessential *zaim*. ANNIA CIEZADLO

DID SWANK FILER MISS HIS CHANCE?

Monterey, Calif.

■ I rarely see letters in the magazine regarding your cryptic crossword puzzle, but I have to voice my displeasure that the clue in Puzzle 3076 for 7 Down ("One will eventually be a Girl Scout to have something like cheese around it") had nothing about doing a heckuva job.

JASON SCHWARTZ

The clue might indeed have said, "Did he do a heckuva job to have something like cheese around it?" (answer: Brownie). But fifty years from now, anyone working the collected puzzle classics of Frank W. Lewis would, mercifully, not get the reference. Time heals. —*The Editors*

CREDIT WHERE IT'S DUE

■ *The War on Lebanon: A Reader* (Interlink, forthcoming), which was mentioned in Philip Weiss's "AIPAC Alternative?" (April 23), was edited by Nubar Hovsepian.

CLARIFICATIONS

■ Because of an editorial glitch, Gary Younge's "Beneath the Radar" column last week referred to "Ed," rather than E.D., Nixon. Although his name *is* Edgar, he is best known as E.D.

Eyal Press, in "The New Suburban Poverty" [April 23], stated that the poverty rate in the three counties surrounding Greensboro, North Carolina, is 14.4 percent, just below the rate in New Orleans. This statement is true of the New Orleans-Metairie metropolitan area, which has a poverty rate of 17.8 percent, but not of the city of New Orleans, which has a poverty rate of 24.5 percent.

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

The Art of the Improviser

DAVID YAFFE

ORNETTE COLEMAN

On or about November 17, 1959, human character changed—according to jazz mythology, anyway. That week, the Ornette Coleman Quartet debuted at Manhattan's Five Spot, a club owned by the culturally fortuitous (and exploitative) Termini brothers, a watering hole for Abstract Expressionist painters and New York School poets. The Five Spot was on the Bowery, poised at an intersection of Skid Row and gentrified bohemia, old ghettos and an in utero East Village counterculture. For a few dollars and a cheap drink, you could stand at the bar and see jazz history in the making, a glimpse into the future that would become part of a fetishized past. The Five Spot wasn't just any dive but a key to the hipster zeitgeist; just two years earlier, in 1957, when the club featured a six-month residency for Thelonious Monk and John Coltrane, Norman Mailer was perched at a table taking notes for his essay "The White Negro."

What were these patrons—from the anonymous scenesters to the cultural icons—hearing, and how were they hearing it? Leonard Bernstein, who had recently performed with Louis Armstrong, allegedly exclaimed, "This is the greatest thing that ever happened to jazz!" Bernstein sat in, Lionel Hampton sang Coleman's praises, John Lewis maintained that Coleman was the first true extension of Parker, and Sonny Rollins sat at the end of the bar and moped, in the midst of his Williamsburg Bridge sabbatical. Coltrane came regularly, and he and Coleman would walk out into the night talking music. LeRoi Jones (nearly a decade away from changing his name to Amiri Baraka) would soon hail Coleman's music as the most uncompromising of black aesthetics, a sonic premonition, a soundtrack to the racial upheaval to come. But while Coleman spread the gospel from Baraka to Bernstein, other pace runners were not so impressed—Miles Davis, for example. Davis had worked so hard to be a man of the moment, but the perch felt precarious when someone else, for the jazz intelligentsia, was defining *The Shape of Jazz to Come*, as the title of Coleman's 1959 album brashly asserted. Staying on one chord was his thing, Davis must have been thinking as he stood at the bar, glaring. But *this* motherfucker wasn't even playing modes. Coleman sounded like an Abstract

FRANCIS WOLFF © MOSAIC IMAGES

Ornette Coleman, 1968

David Yaffe, assistant professor of English at Syracuse University, is the author of Fascinating Rhythm: Reading Jazz in American Writing *(Princeton).*

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Expressionist Louis Jordan, with juke-joint honking and seemingly random splatter. Davis grumpily agreed to sit in and then told a reporter he was sure Coleman was "all screwed up inside." (Coleman would later retort that Davis was a black man who lived like a white man.) Another prominent detractor was Charles Mingus, standing at the bar, arms crossed, making Coleman's bassist, Charlie Haden, tremble. Mingus and Coleman would eventually become friends—Coleman visited Mingus at his deathbed—but Mingus never stopped dissing him. Coleman, he said after the Five Spot gig, was "playing wrong right." Near the end of his life, Mingus harrumphed, "His mama told him he was a genius just because he put the 'm' block next to the 'a' block."

It is remarkable to imagine that there were days when aesthetics were a matter of life and death, when a shift in rhythm or harmony would summon the kind of apocalyptic language usually reserved for war or revolution, a time when the classical music of the moment—from the Darmstadt school of Pierre Boulez and Karlheinz Stockhausen to the New York school of John Cage and Morton Feldman—struggled to define music's future. *Change of the Century*, proclaimed Coleman's second Atlantic title. *This Is Our Music*, thundered the third. These were the days when jazz albums were cultural manifestoes, and when the order, as Bob Dylan put it a few years later, was rapidly fadin'.

Nearly half a century later, Coleman's musical revolution has become official enough for the Pulitzer Prize in Music and a Lifetime Achievement Grammy—his first. (The year 2007 may well be remembered as a year of belated awards, when Martin Scorsese and Coleman finally got their due.) Human character did not change. In fact, the revolution wasn't even televised. Coleman was on camera (along with Natalie Cole, who won a Grammy in 1991 for her necrophiliac duet with her great father) to present the Best New Artist Award to Carrie Underwood, a reminder that in the post–Five Spot era, Paula, Randy and Simon are on hand to inaugurate the next cultural moment. But Coleman's lifetime achievement award was presented at a smaller, B-list ceremony at the Wilshire Ebell Theatre, where they also gave out the technical awards and other industry marginalia. It is a shame that the entire speech can't be quoted here, because it's probably the most remarkable Grammy speech ever made. Here, though, are some highlights:

> One of the things I am experiencing is very important and that is: You don't have to die to kill and you don't have to kill to die. And above all, nothing exists that is not in the form of life because life is eternal with or without people so we are grateful for life to be here at this very moment.
>
> For myself, I'd rather be human than to be dead. And I would also die to be human. So you can't die, you can't die to be neither one, regardless of what you say or think so that's why I believe that music itself is eternal in relationship to sound, meaning, intelligence…all the things that have to have something to do with being alive because you were born and because someone else made it possible for you to be here, which we call our parents etc. etc.
>
> For me, the most eternal thing is that I would like to live until I learn what it is and what it isn't...that is, how do we kill death since it kills everything?

You would think that there would be nothing to add to this, that the rest is silence, but Coleman eventually concludes thus:

> It is really, really eternal, this that we are constantly being created as human beings to know that exists and it's really, really unbelievable to know that nothing that's alive can die unless it's been killed. So what we should try to realize is to remove that part of what it is so that whatever we are, life is all there is and I thank you very much.

Coleman is, in other words, unkillable. In his Lester Young-meets-gangsta porkpie and impeccably tailored pinstriped suit, the Grammy winner was unjustly slighted by fashion roundups of the ceremony. But he's still larger than death. Like Baby Huey, he keeps coming back.

Indeed, Coleman is one of the last immortals. He can still cause ripples in the jazz world, even if that world and its ripples have gotten much smaller. Ornette listeners would wait patiently for him to release a serious jazz album with a serious and worthy rhythm section. Once in a while (the first half of *In All Languages* in 1987, the two *Sound Museum* CDs in 1996), he would. Then only live performances, rumors, man-about-town spottings of him at Harlem fried chicken dives and Upper East Side museums and long spells of silence. Pretty soon, people were waiting for him to release something—anything. This was one of the last surviving jazz musicians who changed the way we hear music. Would he get one more chance to preserve it on disc?

Last year, after nearly a decade without officially released recordings (with incendiary performances along the way), Coleman released *Sound Grammar*, a 2005 live recording from Germany, on his own label of the same name. If the title evokes a lesson, *The Shape of Jazz to Come*, his 1959 album released a few months before the Five Spot gig, announced a prophecy. Could the new title be a shine on those who want to lay down the jazz laws he so legendarily subverted? Is the shape of jazz to come now so well defined that, as the old surviving mavericks roar into their 70s, few even care? When Coleman appeared at the Five Spot, he had already recorded a couple of albums for Contemporary, the second of which, *Tomorrow Is the Question!*, also blared a jazz future few could hear, delivered on a tiny indie label that paid him next to nothing.

Coleman had arrived from LA by way of his hometown, Fort Worth, Texas, a veteran of the rhythm and blues and minstrel circuit who'd been beaten up for playing atonal choruses for crowds that shouted for "Stardust." He had been dissed by beboppers (including Dexter Gordon and Max Roach), who thought him incapable of invoking Charlie Parker (a charge refuted by one listen to "Bird Food" or, really, anything he ever did), in and out of the Jehovah's Witnesses, sporting long hair and a beard in a crew-cut era. He was so ragged and weird, it was a testament to his genius (and more than a little luck) that he found the right people to figure him out. After his tenor saxophone was smashed by hostile listeners, he switched to alto, and the sound he created was, for those willing to listen, the instrument's major step after Parker's revolution in the 1940s; John Lewis was onto something. (In the mid-1960s, Coleman also began playing trumpet and violin without any formal training. His trumpet playing has demonstrated a learning curve over the years but still makes one nostalgic for Don Cherry. His violin playing, on the other hand, remains, shall we say, an acquired taste.) This funky elevator operator got a prized fellowship at 29 to study with the Third Stream guru Gunther Schuller at the Lenox School of Jazz in summer 1959, a contract with Atlantic Records and that Five Spot residency, leading him on an eccentric and improbable path to immortality. Schuller wanted to teach Coleman

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music theory, but when he finally made a breakthrough, Coleman vomited. There would be no more lessons.

In 1959 people were *waiting* for someone to play outside meter and chords while still providing blues and bop signposts. That year Kline and de Kooning were dribbling; Robert Lowell was confessing; Allen Ginsberg wrote "Lysergic Acid"; John Cassavetes's Mingus-scored, jump-cutting *Shadows* swept through arthouse movie theaters; and curiosity seekers were lining up on that chilly Bowery street to check out the man with the plastic saxophone. Miles Davis's *Kind of Blue* had come out a couple of months earlier, just a few months after John Coltrane's *Giant Steps*, each disdaining chord changes in favor of solemn inquiries into chords and modes. Davis's "So What" coolly navigated between a couple of minor Mixolydian modes; Coltrane's "Giant Steps" circled the circle of fifths. Surrounded by a West Coast posse of young, like-minded musicians in short trench coats—including bassist Charlie Haden (who had grown up playing hillbilly music in a family band), Don Cherry (just shy of 23, blowing on a pocket trumpet) and drummer Billy Higgins (who kept time all to himself while sharing his leader's eccentric sense of it)—Coleman showed up at the Five Spot and blew the other band on the bill (Art Farmer and Benny Golson's Jazztet) off the headlines, a gig withered into a footnote.

Who wasn't in the band was just as important as who was: namely, a pianist. Gerry Mulligan and Chet Baker's pianoless quartet had already popularized "cool" jazz a few years earlier; Sonny Rollins had already cut out the piano and filled in the missing chords on tenor on the trio dates *Freedom Suite*, *Way Out West* and *A Night at the Village Vanguard*. But the absence of piano in Coleman's quartet called attention to what else was missing—chords, rhythms, structures.

Coleman's alto was white plastic, like the one Charlie Parker would pick up in haste after leaving his brass one in hock. The plastic was not only preferable for its harsher sound—one with less vibrato than Parker's—but for what was read and perhaps misread, as its aesthetic of artifice: *Ce n'est pas un saxophone!* Of all the ink spilled on Coleman's impact, perhaps the most memorable came from Thomas Pynchon's 1963 debut novel, *V.*, in which the character McClintic Sphere (with a last name nodding to Thelonious Monk's middle name) sets the jazz world on end at a club called the V-Note, making everyone rethink space and time with a motto of equilibrium: "Keep cool, but care." Sphere's alto is ivory, not plastic, but his impact is similarly divisive and shape-shifting:

> He blew a hand-carved ivory alto saxophone with a 4½ reed and the sound was like nothing any of them had heard before. The usual divisions prevailed: collegians did not dig, and left after an average of one and a half sets. Personnel from other groups, either with a night off or taking a long break from somewhere crosstown or uptown, listened hard, trying to dig. "I am still thinking," they would say if you asked.

Unlike Dylan's 1965 electric performance at Newport (a *Rite of Spring* for another genre and another orthodoxy), Coleman's Five Spot gig, in one of the great blunders of music industry history, was never recorded. We have to rely on hearsay and conjecture—and Pynchon!—to get an idea of what everyone was arguing about. Fortunately, Coleman clocked in hours of studio time in the two-year flurry that followed, resulting in a body of work for Atlantic collected on the six-CD box set *Beauty Is a Rare Thing*, a title evoking the mélange of lyricism and clangor he was summoning with empathetic musicians. By the time of its 1993 release, it was an expensive canonical artifact, meant for the mantle like a Pléiades edition of Proust. The liner notes were hyperbolic, but by then the people who were going to be convinced already were.

Perhaps the most telling measure of Coleman's impact was his influence on his detractors, notably Miles Davis, whose great mid-'60s quintet featured the Ornette-inspired virtuosity of pianist Herbie Hancock and drummer Tony Williams. Mingus, who'd developed a novel approach to collective improvisation in his jazz workshops, would also come around, recording his own version of free jazz with Duke Ellington and Max Roach on the 1962 trio session *Money Jungle*, and sublimely collaborating with multireedist Eric Dolphy, who teamed up with Coleman on the 1960 landmark *Free Jazz*. (*Free Jazz*'s original cover was famously adorned with a reproduction of Jackson Pollock's 1954 drip painting *White Light*.) Sonny Rollins and John Coltrane both plucked members of Ornette's Atlantic ensemble of those *anni mirabili* for memorable recordings; Coltrane's *The Avant-Garde* is a classic, and every note on every track of Rollins's *On the Outside* (also known as *Our Man in Jazz*) is a revelation. It's astonishing to hear how the era's most powerful improvisers took Coleman's audacious conceptions and ran with them with a broader vocabulary than he was ever technically capable of developing himself.

Yet just as Pollock's work still provokes sneers from abstraction's adversaries (*my kid could do that!*), so Coleman's innovations still draw resentment from older luminaries. I saw the great swing-era alto player Benny Carter at 90 squeak a wrong note in a club date, only to announce, "That was my Ornette Coleman impression." Was Coleman an idiot or an idiot savant? Gunther Schuller and Martin Williams thought that there was a structure to his music; you just had to learn to hear it. But were they imposing order on a chaos that defied definition? Coleman's playing didn't really change no matter what he played. He was already fully formed. The theorists were just gilding a fascinating but inscrutable lily.

By the time Coleman came up with a theory, "harmolodics," to explain what it all meant—something about harmony and rhythm being the same (and to justify his bloated, though intermittently brilliant 1972 symphony *Skies of America*)—it already seemed redundant. Coleman's best work was behind him, and he had disappeared from the scene a decade earlier, having vowed never to play clubs again, only to perform and record for extravagant fees, which he didn't receive often enough despite memorable recorded dates in Stockholm, lofts and infrequent studio appearances. He took sabbaticals from the American scene for long stretches, but like Nina Simone and Jerry Lewis, he was greeted in Paris with *amour fou*.

Ornette has been appearing and disappearing steadily now for the past forty-four years, setting up shop in his Prince Street loft for a spell in the '70s (performing for friends and neighbors and letting the tape roll), only to be evicted; jetting off to record with the Master Musicians of Joujouka and a *New York Times* music critic, Robert Palmer, on clarinet; hanging out with William Burroughs and Brion Gysin in Morocco; forming the fusion band Prime Time (where the harmolodics act was more droning, repetitive and often dull); performing with body-piercing artists, with Lou Reed, on the *Naked Lunch* soundtrack and with Kurt Masur and the New York Philharmonic. He had such a monastic devotion to his art, he once asked a doctor to castrate him (he was talked into getting circumcised instead). He let his son Denardo play drums with him from the age of 10—the result can be heard on the

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1966 album *The Empty Foxhole*—causing listeners to yearn for the days when his drummers included masters like Higgins, Ed Blackwell and, briefly, the titanic Elvin Jones. Since the 1997 release of *Colors*, a duet with the German pianist Joachim Kühn, Coleman watchers have had to subsist on live performances, reviews, anecdotes and hope. Coleman would reunite with Haden, Cherry and Higgins once in a while before Cherry's death in 1995 and Higgins's in 2001, and his final appearance with Higgins, at an outdoor concert in lower Manhattan's Battery Park in 2000, was vintage Coleman. He spent most of that set playing uninspired ragas with a confused-looking tabla player. Finally, he brought out Haden and Higgins, played some blistering harmolodics (or call them what you will), summoning the shock of the new one more time. Then the park was shut down by Rudy Giuliani, the last call of last calls and an infuriating curfew.

Coleman may have called an album and a composition *Free Jazz*, but the term was in many ways a misnomer. Far from ignoring chords and meter, Coleman's music forces listeners to rethink how they hear them. The notion of complete freedom from formal constraint is even less convincing when applied to Coleman standards like "Peace" and "Lonely Woman." (*Free Jazz*, with its double quartet and layered cacophony, is sloppier but still weirdly ordered.) Coleman and his early collaborators were not merely playing whatever aleatory utterances happened to suit them. Those tunes have melodies (or "heads") and solos to go around, but the musicians were restless, wanting to inject spontaneity and maybe a little shock into what had become a postbop routine. "Lonely Woman" is a standard with chord changes and a melody line, but playing it in strict 4/4 time (as Branford Marsalis has, in an intriguing, intensely brooding interpretation on *Random Abstract*) won't really get to what Ornette was driving at; pianist Geri Allen's "Lonely Woman," like the Modern Jazz Quartet cover of 1962, made the melody clear without diluting its unsettled glory (eventually inspiring Coleman to break his forty-year recording ban on pianists to hire her for his band). Coleman once remarked that he wished he could have an entire ensemble play like an off-tempo Robert Johnson, all scattered emotions and wailing without having to keep time, as if there were nothing more outside than being the King of the Delta Blues.

It was not for nothing that Coleman called a classic (currently out-of-print) Prime Time album *Of Human Feelings*. Feeling, not theory, has always come first for Coleman, harmolodic explanations notwithstanding. There's a hypnotic pulse to the 1959 "Lonely Woman" that defies explanation. You hear Higgins's high-wire cymbal rides with Charlie Haden strumming against the beat, a disconnected melody to match discombobulated emotions. Coleman said he was inspired to write the song watching a woman fight with a man, but the loneliness is also pure Coleman, a sound that has inspired shock, misunderstanding, even violence, while persuading listeners—sometimes delicately, sometimes forcefully—to hear the world the way he hears it. "He plays all the notes Bird missed," says one of the McClintic Sphere onlookers in Pynchon's *V.*, and nearly half a century later, those notes sound like an indelible vocabulary. What you also hear in Coleman's work—which is more debatable in the free jazz of, say, pianist Cecil Taylor—is swing and the blues, and this has helped his work of this period make its way into the Jazz at Lincoln Center canon, stretching the boundaries of what, for lack of a better term, is called swing. According to this version of jazz history, the Coleman Atlantics represent its ultimate culmination, a blues as deep, in its own way, as Robert Johnson's, and a particular kind of flexibility that is the rhythmic bedrock of Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Charlie Parker—the canon. What was called avant-garde now sounds more like a culmination of a tradition. And whether he played funk, rock, symphonies, ragas or as a Grateful Dead sideman, he sounded like the same Ornette Coleman who drew from this well and came up as himself.

You can hear that tradition—and Coleman's ingenious flight from it—on the *Sound Grammar* version of "Turnaround," which Coleman first recorded on *Tomorrow Is the Question!* in February 1959, months before the turmoil on the Bowery. The blues, which would become one of Coleman's most covered and requested compositions, is one of the less adventurous tracks on the album, not least because it is one of only three numbers with the comparatively mainstream bassist Red Mitchell. (The other tracks had the more enabling and endorsing Modern Jazz Quartet bass player Percy Heath.) Despite the odd fact that it is an eleven—as opposed to twelve—bar blues, Coleman's punch line comes, as the title suggests, on the turnaround, when a repeated blues phrase is given a response in a few different keys, veering outside just for a few bars before coming back to where the blues began, suggesting a shape of what was to come.

On *Sound Grammar*'s "Turnaround," Coleman's blues lines are given a polyphonic response, with Greg Cohen plucking with enough open space to let Coleman breathe and Tony Falanga bowing a lyrical counterpart. (By featuring two bassists, *Sound Grammar* finally makes good on an experiment Coleman started on *Free Jazz*, when he played with Charlie Haden and Scott LaFaro.) Denardo meets his father's phrase with a thud, and Coleman, not usually known to quote, throws in Stephen Foster's "Beautiful Dreamer" and, maybe unconsciously, the start of Vernon Duke's "I Can't Get Started." It was more of a Sonny Rollins moment in improvisatory allusion, but in a world Coleman made. What would have been a concession in 1959 is a valediction in 2005.

On June 16, 2006, on what happened to be the 102nd anniversary of Bloomsday, Ornette Coleman played Carnegie Hall in the most anticipated performance of the JVC Jazz Festival. On a day that was the setting for James Joyce's *Ulysses*—a novel that had begun as avant-garde and ended up on the top of the Modern Library list—paying respects to a revolution turned inevitability seemed appropriate. Coleman added a third bassist, Al McDowell on electric, to the ensemble that played on *Sound Grammar*, muddying the polyphony and the hall's acoustics. But even if McDowell hadn't plugged in, this was not to be a night on par with those triumphs of a few years earlier. Bernstein had crashed the Five Spot back in 1959, but now the musical chairs were reversed. Coleman had been more accustomed to playing concert halls for some time, and the music he played was about as avant-garde as Mozart or King Oliver. A 76-year-old virtuoso played some crowd-pleasing versions of "Lonely Woman" and "Turnaround," pained, heartfelt and defiant, on an alto that somehow sounded as clear as a bell. Even if his tone was more refined, it seemed no less wounded. Outside the hall, it was a new century, one that he would not change. A few months later, 1,085 pages of a new Thomas Pynchon novel would thud into selected mailboxes, opening with a cryptic Thelonious Monk epigraph: "It's always night, or we wouldn't need light." All these years later, a couple of elusive tricksters from the old twentieth century still had some mysteries to illuminate. ■

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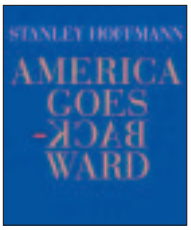

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Stranger in the City

TARA GALLAGHER

THE BEAUTIFUL THINGS THAT HEAVEN BEARS. By Dinaw Mengestu. Riverhead. 228 pp. $22.95.

In *The Enigma of Arrival*, V.S. Naipaul's autobiographical narrator, a Trinidadian of Indian ancestry, finds himself living in the British countryside: "The idea of ruin and dereliction, of out-of-placeness, was something I felt about myself, attached to myself: a man from another hemisphere, another background, coming to rest in middle life in the cottage of a half-neglected estate." Sepha Stephanos, the Ethiopian shopkeeper who narrates Dinaw Mengestu's graceful first novel, has Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* behind his counter and a similar affinity for dilapidated surroundings—not the countryside but Washington, DC's Logan Circle: "Four- and five-story mansions that had once belonged to someone of great import—a president's cousin, or aunt, or maybe nephew—but that over the years had been neglected, burned out, or in my case, divided into cheap, sometimes cockroach-infested apartments.... I loved the circle for what it had become: proof that wealth and power were not immutable, and America was not always so great after all."

The Naipaul novel was a gift from Joseph, a Congolese would-be intellectual who, with Kenneth, a Kenyan immigrant, visits Sepha's shabby convenience store every Tuesday, where they drink whiskey and quiz one another on the violent upheavals of the continent they left as young men—"Name a dictator and then guess the year and country." ("When we stop having coups, we can stop playing," says Joseph.) They had met while working as bellhops at the Capitol Hotel seventeen years earlier, soon after Sepha fled the "red terror" at home. Their lives have not been without success since then—Joseph is a waiter at "the premier eating establishment of the District's elite," Kenneth has a job as an engineer, Sepha has his store—but they have been subjected to "enough mockery and humiliation to last us well beyond our lifetimes" and have long since relinquished their faith in the American Dream.

Logan Circle, however, is on the mend. New customers come into the store looking for bottled water, and once-boarded windows that formerly obscured crack addicts and homeless men now feature "curtains provocatively peeled back to reveal a warmly lit room with forest green couches, modern silver lamps that craned their necks like swans, and sleek glass coffee tables with fresh flowers bursting on top." Sepha had been drawn to the neighborhood because "I didn't have to be anything greater than what I already was," but he greets the regeneration with hope—hope that his failing business will be buoyed by the rising tide and that his life might come to include two of the people it bears: Judith, a professor of American political history who has given up on her marriage and academic career, and her precocious young daughter, Naomi, who claims Sepha's friendship easily (they read *The Brothers Karamazov* together) and whose "lighter than black but darker than white" skin is less like her mother's than his own. Sepha's account of the defeat of those hopes, over the course of five months, provides the novel's narrative frame.

In Dave Eggers's recent novel about a newly arrived Sudanese refugee, *What Is the What*, the narrator observes the casual cruelty of people robbing him and thinks, "You would not add to my suffering if you knew what I have seen." Mengestu's narrator has grown more resigned to the injustices of his life—"There is no denying anymore who we are and what we've become"—but the implicit plaint is the same. Interwoven with the arrival and departure of Judith and Naomi are Sepha's recollections of the years that came before—the opening of the store, his difficult first years in America and his childhood in Addis Ababa as "a young boy with the greatest ambitions and dreams, guided by a prominent father and distinguished family background." At the center of these memories is the day soldiers came and took his father away because of antirevolutionary fliers that Sepha had brought home: "I was only sixteen at the time. I didn't believe in consequences yet." It is a memory that he puzzles over but can never comprehend. ("Is it possible that they practiced this routine before coming over? Or is it something that's grown organically out of their previous experiences?") Mengestu's impeccably controlled prose denies the relief of emotional release, but Sepha's recollection of that day keens with sorrow and regret. It is naïve to wish that undeserved suffering could be a guarantee against which future happiness is redeemed, but to understand the trauma of Sepha's experience is to feel the continual dashing of his modest hopes in America (that he might find intimacy, that he might eventually feel as though he belongs) as not simply unjust but obscene.

The force of the novel does not, however, derive solely from events two decades past. Sepha's observations of his present life—the changing neighborhood and its marginalized inhabitants, the rhythms of the city—are wry and tender, making the poverty of his circumstances, emotional as much as material, seem all the more difficult to bear. Sepha, after all, is eminently equipped for a life other than "a poorly constructed substitution made up of one uncle, two friends, a grim store, and a cheap apartment." And Joseph, whose deep appreciation for Dante's *Inferno* (this is a literary story in the truest sense) gives the novel its title, would have been an intellectual if his family hadn't lost everything to Mobutu. But one needn't have been deprived of grand opportunities for disappointments to cause distress. Kenneth, the only one of Sepha's friends to have a job requiring a suit, vehemently reminds Sepha and Joseph that he fled poverty, not war—that if he hadn't come to America he would not be among Kenya's elite but one of the "poor illiterates dying in slums"—yet he is so alienated in his nominally better life that he spends most evenings in a lawn chair in his apartment, laughing hysterically and arguing with himself. And one needn't have been displaced to feel the contrast between inner and social life as insufferably sharp. In quiet, elegant tones, Mengestu achieves the uncommon feat of conveying the profound devastation of arbitrarily broken lives while illuminating the quotidian fractures in our own. ■

Tara Gallagher is a writer in New York.

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Cafe Society

WILLIAM DERESIEWICZ

CULTURAL AMNESIA: Necessary Memories From History and the Arts.
By Clive James. Norton. 876 pp. $35.

When I was younger and more pretentious, I used to toy with the idea of founding something called the Boethian League. Boethius, the sixth-century Roman philosopher who was put to death by the Ostrogoth king Theodoric the Great after spending his life trying to preserve classical learning, was, to my imagination, the Last Man of Antiquity, and I used to picture him gazing out, as if on the edge of a dark sea, over the abyss of barbarism that followed in his wake. We Boethians would be the Last People of Western Culture, leagued together for the purpose of leaving some record of what that culture had been for the remote posterity that might someday rediscover it, as the Renaissance had rediscovered classical civilization eight centuries after Boethius. Our collective output would be called Letters to the Fourth Millennium.

What I didn't realize at the time was that a one-man Boethian League was already in operation, and that his name was Clive James. *Cultural Amnesia*, forty years in the making and the summa of James's unparalleled career as a cultural critic, may not be a letter to the fourth millennium, but it is explicitly one to the twenty-first century, from and about the twentieth and prompted by the suspicion that a new age of barbarism is indeed descending. At the same time, this vast work is also an epic of the mind that produced it, an implicit record of its author's remarkable life and an argument for the intertwined values of humanism, liberal democracy, literary clarity and moral courage.

The catalogue has been a convention of Western epic ever since Homer sang of the thousand ships that sailed for Troy, and James ends his introduction with a catalogue of the cities in whose cafes he has sat over the course of his long career as a journalist and television presenter—not to mention novelist, poet, lyricist, essayist, memoirist, travel writer and book and television critic—working his way through tall stacks of books. The list begins with Sydney, his birthplace, wends its way across forty cities on six continents and ends up back in Sydney—a symbolic circumnavigation of the geographic and literary worlds. The books were in French, German, Russian, Italian, Spanish and Latin, as well as English, languages that James mostly taught himself, and *Cultural Amnesia* is a series of meditations on the writers and other figures, more than a hundred of them, who have meant the most to him for reasons good or ill.

The book, then, is itself a kind of catalogue, alphabetically arranged—an abridged encyclopedia of twentieth-century art, thought and politics: Marcel Proust and Jean Prévost, Aleksandr Zinoviev and Alexandra Kollontai, Thomas Mann and Josef Goebbels, G.K. Chesterton and Margaret Thatcher. The list is remarkable for its range: composers like Erik Satie and Duke Ellington, performers like W.C. Fields and Dick Cavett (James disdains the distinction between high and low art), heroic victims like Sophie Scholl and Heda Margolis Kovaly, discoveries like Paul Muratov, whom James calls "the most learned, original and stylistically gifted Russian art historian of his time" but whose work is now almost completely forgotten.

The Muratov essay typifies the book in a number of ways. There is the magisterial judgment I just quoted, which bespeaks not only breathtaking erudition but also supreme self-confidence. Elsewhere we're told that the Viennese wits Alfred Polgar and Egon Friedell wrote "the most successful full-length cabaret script of the years between the wars," that Enrique Santos Discépolo was the most gifted and prolific tango lyricist in Buenos Aires and, with a rare qualification, that Abba Eban's *Personal Witness* is "perhaps the most remarkably sustained work of intricate diplomatic exposition ever published." Then there is James's bibliophilia (or bibliomania). He tells us that he's assembled his collection of Muratov's work by ransacking bookstores worldwide, and throughout the book he lingers to describe the color or

William Deresiewicz, who teaches English at Yale, is a regular contributor to The Nation*'s Books and the Arts section.*

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texture of particularly handsome editions. Rilke's are apparently especially beautiful, with the result that James's shelf of the poet's books ("let alone of books about him") now measures some five feet and counting. Where does he find the space?

Never mind the space—where does he find the time? Not by cutting corners: "At one stage I read all the way through [Sainte-Beuve's] collected *Causeries de lundi* columns in a bunch of disintegrating paperbacks I bought from a *bouquiniste* on the Left Bank.... (It was one of the ways I learned French)." Either by reading fast or not sleeping: On the same weekend he read Karl Tschuppik's book on the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in a Bohemian state library, "I worked through the two imposing volumes of Metternich's *Denkwürdigkeiten*." James pays his audience the high compliment of assuming it shares his energy and appetite. His imagined reader is a young intellectual making his or her start in culture the way the author himself did half a century ago, and James offers a steady stream of advice on how to go about the business of self-education: must-reads and how-tos, anecdotes and exemplars. One of his highest terms of praise is "he figured it out for himself."

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But James's vision of the life of the mind only begins with the individual. His introduction explains how he used to struggle with the seeming paradox that culture doesn't necessarily lead to humanism—witness Leni Riefenstahl or Louis-Ferdinand Céline, both of whom made common cause with totalitarian regimes. Then it dawned on him: "Humanism wasn't in the separate activities" that comprise culture, "humanism was the connection between them," "all the aspects of life illuminating one another, in a honeycomb of understanding." Humanism is the embrace of human creativity in all its variety. From this principle follows a complete aesthetics, politics and sociology of humanistic endeavor, though James would reject such lifeless and systematizing terms for the philosophy he elaborates, unsystematically and in full-blooded contact with the particulars of dozens of actual lives, across the length of the book.

The sociology comes first. Before he launches his symphony of voices with Anna Akhmatova, James gives us an "overture" on the cafe culture of prewar Vienna. It is the place where his imagination seems most at home, precisely because it was a time when the life of the mind was lived collectively and interconnectedly, by an astonishing array of wits and polymaths and artists and journalists (like Friedell and Polgar and Peter Altenberg and Stefan Zweig, who fittingly bookends the alphabetical procession). The cafes were their clubhouse, their debating society, their stage, sometimes even their mailing address. They were there, for the most part, because they were Jews, and as Jews they were excluded from the universities. The situation was humiliating for many, but the result, James says, was that "whole generations of Jewish literati were denied the opportunity of wasting their energies compiling abstruse doctoral theses."

By a lucky chance, I started reading *Cultural Amnesia* on my way down to the annual convention of the Modern Language Association, the professional organization of literary academics. Nothing in a long time has focused my discontent with academic life more pointedly than James's assertion that "Vienna was the best evidence that the most accommodating and fruitful ground for the life of the mind can be something more broad than a university campus." In James's cosmology, the university is the infernal (and infertile) counterpart to the paradise of the cafe. Humanism means interconnection, and the cafe gives that interconnection social form. Academia necessitates specialization and incessantly

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discourages intellectual breadth (now more than ever, no matter how much lip service is paid to "interdisciplinarity"). The academic conference, where small groups of identically specialized professionals meet to debate narrow questions of interpretation and doctrine, is the cafe's demonic double.

But James's evocation of Viennese cafe society is elegiac, and not just because that society was destroyed by Hitler. James, too, has been a denizen of cafes, but he has haunted them alone. Friedell and Polgar and Altenberg were sitting on the table, not around it. Though James's life has been richly social, as he hints from time to time, still, "most of [my] listening was done by reading." For a host of reasons—the expansion of universities, of suburbs and of telecommunications, to name three—the kind of face-to-face intellectual-artistic life that Vienna exemplified, and that flourished in other twentieth-century cities, simply no longer exists. James's answer to this bereavement is the book itself. Here is the cafe he has created in his mind, a convocation of voices that respond to one another across the barriers of language, outlook, expressive form and, most of all, time.

If, for James, the cafe is humanism's ideal social context, its necessary political one is liberal democracy. The civilized life that humanism seeks to embrace in its totality is by its nature "provokingly multifarious" and "bewilderingly complex." Its preconditions, James believes, are pluralism, tolerance and freedom, the values that liberal democracy enshrines. All else, he implies, is totalitarianism, whether of the right or the left. For James, totalitarianism's essential intellectual structure is ideology (which, when it travels in the academy, goes by the name of "theory"): the belief that you possess an idea that explains everything. With such a key in hand, you can stop learning, stop doubting yourself, stop listening to other people—all the activities that humanism most requires. If your ideology is salvationist (and which of them isn't?), you will even feel justified in shutting those other people up—if necessary, by killing them.

The twentieth century's two great totalitarian ideologies were Nazism and Communism, and James devotes a large number of his essays to figures involved with one or the other—as perpetrators, apologists, resisters or victims. If James's cultural imagination is rooted in Vienna, his political imagination is rooted in the decades when Hitler and Stalin forced European intellectuals into the direst of moral choices. The cumulative message of these entries is that history has a way of waking up and finding you out. And so the reason to read history, James quotes Zweig as saying, is "to see how other men had acted" when tested by events, and to measure oneself beside them. Faced with Hitler or Stalin, some, like the saintly Sophie Scholl, executed at the age of 21 for refusing to renounce her nonviolent resistance to the Nazi regime, martyred themselves in the cause of righteousness; some, like Nadezhda Mandelstam, survived to bear witness; some, like Ernst Robert Curtius, the great romance philologist, withdrew from public life; and some, like Jean Cocteau, openly collaborated.

And then there was Jean-Paul Sartre. Sartre is the book's antihero, who "looms in the corner...like a genius with the evil eye." For James, Sartre's response to both Nazism and Stalinism was just about the worst an intellectual can do. After largely acquiescing in the occupation, Sartre retroactively co-opted the Resistance by placing himself at the head of the "post-Liberation witch-hunt" that "called down vengeance on people whose behavior had not really been all that much more reprehensible than his own." After the war, he became a paragon of the ideologically committed leftist intellectual, James's bête noire, and

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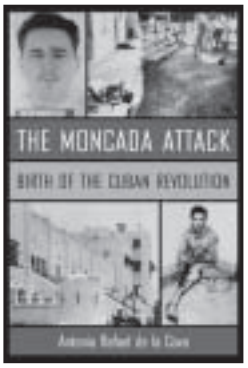

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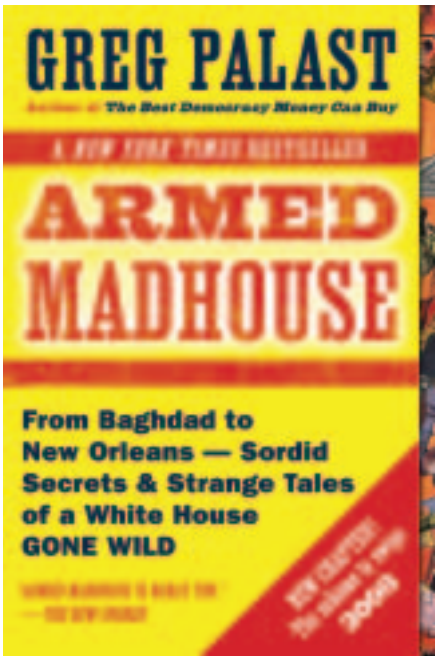

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it is a major project of *Cultural Amnesia* to impugn the credibility, intellectual as well as moral, of him and everyone like him. James's own political heroes are liberal intellectuals like Sartre's great nemesis, Raymond Aron, who exposed Communism and defended the sanity, strength and value of liberal society.

But Sartre's sins were stylistic as well as political, and they bring us to James's humanist aesthetics and its connection to his humanist politics. For James, Sartre's abstruse, impacted philosophical style was designed to conceal more than just the vacuity of his thought: "If Sartre wanted to avoid examining his own behavior—and clearly he did—he would need to develop a manner of writing philosophy in which he could sound as if he was talking about everything while saying nothing." And it's not just Sartre; it's also Heidegger, Lacan, Derrida and the rest of the Obscurantist International. Clarity is the enemy of self-deception, and of the larger deception known as ideology. Style is not an ornament of thought but its very substance, and thinking is an ethical act. Humanism, which seeks a complex integration of disparate experience, requires the most difficult kind of style: a simple one. "Great writing," James tells us, "is not just writing," because to become great it must respond to, and thus forces us into an awareness of, the whole of reality. The crabbed, pedantic cant typically favored by academics responds to only a tiny crumb of reality; the abstract bombast of ideologues responds to no reality whatsoever.

Great writing requires loftiness of soul. Good writing merely requires a reader who has the option of turning the page. The Viennese writers who were denied the chance to write dissertations for an audience of one "were driven instead to journalism, plain speech, direct observation and the necessity to entertain." They wrote essays, reviews, sketches and squibs; they also wrote in longer and more conventionally prestigious forms, but always in styles that had been honed by the whetstone of conversation. *Cultural Amnesia* is an extended defense of literary journalism as occupying not only an honorable place within the hierarchy of cultural discourse but the supreme one. For journalism demands both simplicity and compression, and compression makes language glow. James's stylistic models are writers like Altenberg, who could "pour a whole view of life, a few cupfuls at a time, into the briefest of paragraphs." His highest hero, "the voice behind the [book's] voices" (and one of several exceptions to his rule of writing only about twentieth-century figures), is Tacitus. It was Tacitus who wrote the sentence out of which the entire volume grew: "They make a desert and they call it peace." James heard the line quoted as a young man and "saw straight away that a written sentence could sound like a spoken one, but have much more in it."

Indeed, *Cultural Amnesia* is less a collection of great figures than of great sentences. Each entry begins with a thumbnail sketch of the individual in question but mainly consists of James's commentary on one or more quotations drawn from his or her writing. Sometimes the commentary concerns its author, sometimes not. No matter what it concerns—pornography, movie dialogue, the politics of literary exile, the problem of high seriousness in modern art—it is invariably absorbing. Reading the book feels like having a conversation with the most interesting person in the world: You're not saying much, but you just want to keep listening anyway. The reason James is such a good talker, though, is that he's such a good listener. He means it literally when he says that the book took forty years to write, because its quotations are the harvest of the notebooks he has kept for all that time, and the notebooks are the harvest of his insatiable reading.

Ever since running into Tacitus, James has been a connoisseur of aphorisms and aphorists—of writing that is both conversational and compressed and of the kinds of minds that produce it. It's no coincidence that he is also a connoisseur of music. "Echoes of a predecessor's rhythm, pace and melody are rarely accidental": That sentence contains four terms that sound like they refer to music, but it's about writing. Rhythm is central to James's understanding of style, and so are "echoes"—that is, memory. He is himself an incandescent and virtually habitual aphorist—I wanted to follow his advice and copy down his best lines into a notebook of my own, but I would have had to transcribe the entire book—and so his love of the beautifully turned phrase goes far deeper than mere appreciation. "Few writers have ever had a more identifiable tone of voice than Egon Friedell," he writes, "but the tone was a synthesis of all the voices he had ever heard, and so is ours." The most individual style in the world is the product of a collective effort. In gathering the voices that inhabit his own, the echoes he hears in his head, James has indeed produced an epic on the growth of his mind, a song of himself.

Still, for all his talent for aphoristic utterance and sensitivity to other people's, James has some curious ideas about style.

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For one thing, he thinks the closer good writers get to the truth, the more they tend to sound the same, as if wit operated by a single set of principles that all its practitioners follow. For another, he believes there is a single ideal English prose style, and that it was achieved by one or two writers in the years between the wars. The two positions are clearly related. If you think there's a single template for good writing, you will necessarily think that some writers come closer to approximating it than others, and you may also think that a few writers actually achieve it. For James, the writer who achieves it, at least in English, is Evelyn Waugh: "Nobody ever wrote a more unaffectedly elegant English; he stands at the height of English prose; its hundreds of years of steady development culminate in him." Despite the characteristic absoluteness of the judgment, however, top honors are apparently shared by another writer, F. Scott Fitzgerald, practitioner of what James calls "the ideal natural, neutral style."

There are several problems here. For one thing, languages don't develop, much less steadily; they only change. Sir Thomas Browne wrote one kind of English prose in the seventeenth century, Samuel Johnson in the eighteenth, John Ruskin in the nineteenth, Joan Didion in the twentieth. Each may represent a kind of local summit, but none is higher than another, only more or less pleasing to particular ears, which are always formed by the language of their time. It is probably no accident that Waugh and Fitzgerald flourished in the years just before James was born. For another thing, a neutral style isn't necessarily better than a highly accented one. I love Waugh's elegance, and I also love the virtuosic kvetching of *Portnoy's Complaint*, and I don't see why I should have to choose between them. Art isn't *American Idol*; there doesn't have to be a winner. For a third, there is no such thing as a neutral style, only ones that try to sound that way. Style is the thumbprint of personality, and Waugh and Fitzgerald were two writers whose personalities were shaped by an outsider's need to blend into—to appear neutral to—an intensely suspicious aristocracy. And the ideals of aristocratic behavior, of course, are naturalness and elegance. Finally, James himself doesn't believe any of this stuff about neutral styles half the time. As he says about Friedell and implies again and again in the book's many subtle stylistic appreciations, every good voice is an idiosyncratic one. There's no mistaking Wilde for Shaw, or Pascal for Rochefoucauld, or Martin Amis for Clive James.

EVENTS

INTERNATIONAL

Dubrovnik, Croatia

■ "Transforming Culture: From Empire to Global Community." June 3–9, Dubrovnik, Croatia. Since the 2007 Praxis conference will be held in Europe, we will highlight some of the most advanced examples of cultural transformation and sustainability that are being practiced and developed in Europe today. From the Mondragon Cooperatives in Spain to alternative energy in Denmark, we will showcase projects that demonstrate seventh-generation, life-affirming values. The conference will feature outstanding thinkers and doers, practical workshops, networking, small-group cafe discussions and even vacation time in one of the world's most beautiful sites. Speakers include: Tom Hayden, Frances Moore Lappé, George Lakoff, Hazel Henderson, Thom Hartmann, Riane Eisler, David Korten, Johan Galtung, European members of Parliament and more. More information on our website: www.praxispeace.org (click on Dubrovnik Conference '07). Or call (707) 939-2973.

NATIONAL

April 28: Nationwide Impeachment Protests

■ George Bush and Dick Cheney have committed numerous high crimes and misdemeanors, including misleading the nation into a war of aggression, spying in open violation of the law and sanctioning the use of torture. The Green Party, Code Pink, Progressive Democrats of America and others have launched a major new campaign to pursue accountability for these crimes through the constitutional remedy of impeachment. Since Congress doesn't seem to get it, we're calling on all Americans who stand for truth rather than lying, freedom rather than spying, and justice rather than torture to join us on April 28 in spelling it out for them: IMPEACH! For more information, please visit www.a28.org.

NEW YORK

Howard Zinn and Anthony Arnove

■ Special evening of readings from their book *Voices of a People's History of the United States*. Wednesday, May 2, 6:30 PM. With performances by Danny Glover, Ally Sheedy, Stanley Tucci, Allison Moorer, Brian Jones, Kathleen Chalfant, Steve Earle, Harris Yulin, Staceyann Chin, Opal Alladin, Erin Cherry, Deepa Fernandes and other special guests. Narration and introduction by Howard Zinn and Anthony Arnove. The Great Hall, Cooper Union. Free to the public. Sponsored by The Cooper Union. *Voices of a People's History of the United States* (www.sevenstories.com/Book/index.cfm?GCOI=58322100666900), edited by Howard Zinn and Anthony Arnove, is the companion volume to *A People's History of the United States* by Howard Zinn. It features the words of rebels, dissenters and visionaries from our past—and present—including Malcolm X, Frederick Douglass, Fannie Lou Hamer, Maria Stewart, Tecumseh, Emma Goldman, Paul Robeson, Susan B. Anthony, Yuri Kochiyama, Leonard Peltier, Cindy Sheehan, Martin Luther King Jr., Henry Turner and many others. The public performances of *Voices* are inspiring, challenging reminders of our rich history of protest and its relevance for today.

David Satcher MD, PhD

■ Wednesday, May 16, 7:30 PM. Physicians for a National Health Program NY Metro Chapter invites you to hear David Satcher MD, PhD, former US Surgeon General and current director of the Center of Excellence on Health Disparities at Morehouse School of Medicine, discuss "The Role of Health Care Reform in the Elimination of Health Care Disparities." Sixth-annual Joanne Lukomnik Forum. Weill Medical College of Cornell University, 1300 York Ave. at 69th St., New York City. Free. Reservations not required, but to assure a place send us your name. (212) 666-4001. Fax: (212) 866-5847. E-mail: pnhpnyc@igc.org.

Worker Education National Conference Call

■ Storming the Heavens: Worker Education and Social Activism Commemorating the 25th anniversary of the founding of the CUNY Centers for Worker Education. A conference for labor scholars, educators, trade unionists, current and former worker-students. June 1–2, 25 Broadway, New York City. Proposals are welcome for papers, presentations and panels exploring the history, politics and contemporary significance of Worker Education in the US and abroad. Teachers, staff and students in worker-education programs are encouraged to contribute to the discourse reflecting their institutional and personal experiences and social impact. Labor scholars and trade unionists are especially encouraged to attend and/or participate. www.workereducation.org. (212) 966-4014.

VERMONT

May Day Celebration

■ At Barre's Old Labor Hall on the evenings of April 30 and May 1, Primo Maggio (May Day), the Workers' Holiday, will be celebrated. At 7 PM on April 30, Randy Croce will present the world premiere of his new film *Se la pietra sapesse parlare* (If Stone Could Speak), which portrays the immigration of stonecutters from northern Italy to Barre. On May 1, following a traditional Italian dinner, Rudolph Vecoli will speak on "Primo Maggio: Origins and History of the Workers' Holiday." Old Labor Hall, free admission. Dessert and coffee. Cash bar. Benefit for Labor Hall. Reservations: The Barre Historical Society, PO Box 496, Barre, VT 05641. (802) 476-8777. briggslane@charter.net.

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There are also problems with James's political ideas. After a lifetime of fighting doctrinaire leftists, he's become a bit doctrinaire himself in his dismissal of everything that smacks of progressive thinking. There's little sense in the book that liberal democracies ever do anything wrong. He makes excuses for the Red Scare, soft-pedals colonialism and makes no distinction between political and economic freedom. He does say that the two components of "liberal democracy" must remain in balance, but he ignores the fact that capitalism, and capitalist governments, have often been inimical to both freedom and democracy, especially in the developing world. As for that world, James remarks that "most of the poverty on Earth is caused by the number of people being born who would ordinarily never have been conceived." Even if we amend "been conceived" to "survived," the statement is incredibly simplistic and ill-informed (not to mention creepily Malthusian). However wide James's erudition, it apparently doesn't extend to economics.

But there's a larger issue. For all his acuity about the moral dilemmas posed by totalitarian societies to intellectuals and others, James seems uninterested in the possibility that liberal democracies can pose such dilemmas, too, even if far less tragically or urgently. To say that we're better than Stalinist Russia sets a pretty low bar, and hardly settles the matter. Granted that *Cultural Amnesia* is intended to convey the experience of earlier generations to the latest one, I see no point in reminding us that history has a tendency to find you out without also pointing out, at least in passing, how it's doing so right now. Totalitarianism may be essentially finished, as James says, but history isn't, and one would think that he, of all people, knows that. Instead, astoundingly, he concludes the book by declaring precisely the reverse: "The young might do well to tie a handkerchief over the rear-view mirror and just get on with it. The world is turning into one big liberal democracy anyway." This is a statement in which Francis Fukuyama and Dr. Pangloss hold hands and jump off a cliff. It also sounds exactly like the kind of thing people were saying just before the start of that era of peace and justice known as the twentieth century.

These last-minute reversals are rather stunning, but they do little to diminish this overwhelmingly valuable book and indeed may be inseparable from the source of its many strengths. Does he contradict himself? Very well then, he contradicts himself. He is large, he contains multitudes. ■

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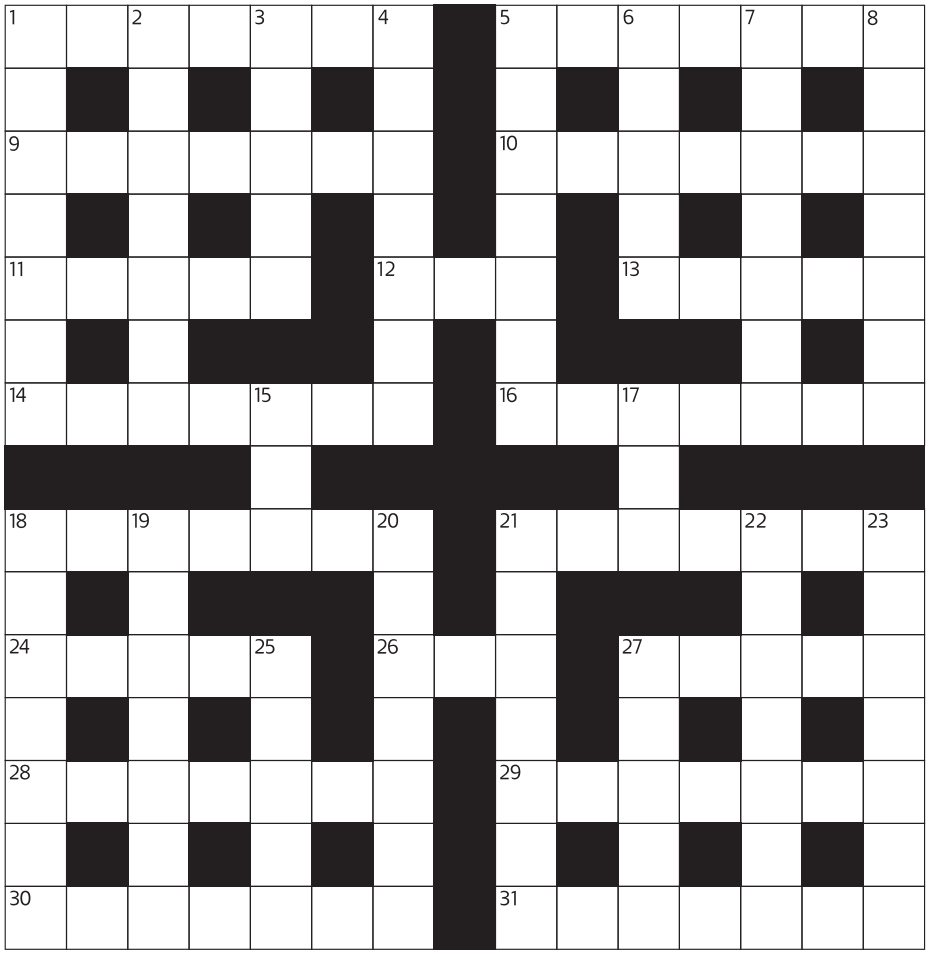

ACROSS

1 Prevents most of the unsightly growths on the skin. (7)

5 and **9** See 11

10 Oater, as they say, when you and I get a rather severe appearance. (7)

11, 5 and **9** The old song seems to take place subsequent to a called strike. (5,3,4,3,4)

12 and **24** Look at those dentures! They just seem to grow on you! (3,5)

13 The old physician proved to be a bloodsucker! (5)

14 Evidently the warmer has bumps on it, and rubs elbows with other people. (7)

16 All duded up as one from the barnyard might be. (7)

18 The capital of Denmark shows fighting got sustenance, but was made much smaller. (7)

21 One who presents a poser, or just one who shoots everything full of holes? (7)

24 See 12

26 and **27** Tangled bits of hair that an impish sort used to shut people out. (8)

28 Laugh at a spoor! (You can put a cap on it!) (3-4)

29 Drinkers around those who make one of themselves when eating too much get turned on quite often. (7)

30 Does one who operates have instructions to push ahead? (7)

31 Once worn by the driver—those who give everything the brushoff. (7)

DOWN

1 Where the mule used to pull a couple mistakenly on the walkway. (7)

2 The immaculate type might do this after using it on Saturday night, reputedly. (7)

3 Captain Kidd and his dog, possibly? (5)

4 Did they have fringe benefits for those wanting a fancy ride? (7)

5 How 1 down begins with an English schoolmaster to make one almost white on top. (7)

6 What does it do for the artist? Hold that pose—even though the lease got broken! (5)

7 Keep that young look forever! (7)

8 The artist did this on the grass, but the meal went to the talking horse. (7)

15 and **17** How baloney might get cut is a way to get some people upset. (6)

18 Gets away from someone in the trenches? (7)

19 One who aids another is obviously one more well-placed. (7)

20 One of Bambi's relatives behaves this way with spilled ink and leather! (7)

21 The box might have to be after the breakers blew, and wouldn't comply. (7)

22 Misplace part of the play inside? How sweet! (7)

23 Not good sisters—but a struggle is put up, if one does. (7)

25 One might do it with a "Ho!" on board, but the man goes on the little boulevard this way. (5)

27 Wild lions, or parts thereof. (5)

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Revolutionary shoe design could save millions of older Americans from serious injury.

By John Fleming

Not just a good looking sneaker. While they may look like other shoes, Slip Resist Shoes represent the latest in footwear innovation.

These days, getting older doesn't necessarily mean slowing down. More and more Americans are staying active longer, and enjoying a variety of activities like walking, aerobics, and other sports. Unfortunately, this active lifestyle puts them at a greater risk for slipping and falling. What's more, many people are at risk even if they don't engage in these activities. Many slip and fall walking around the house, or in the grocery store produce aisle. If this is a worry for you or someone you love, read on.

For years, companies have known about the danger of slipping and falling in the workplace. As a result, shoe manufacturers began to experiment with new materials to come up with slip resistant shoes. Unfortunately, while these shoes were safer, they weren't durable or comfortable, and they certainly weren't stylish. Now, a leader in the footwear industry has created shoes that not only help keep you from slipping, but they are so comfortable they are worn by factory workers, who are on their feet for eight or more hours a day. Here's the secret. In the past, the difficulty in designing slip-resistant shoes involved the hardness of the sole. The softer the material, the greater the traction. Unfortunately, soft materials wear out quickly. Our remarkable shoes are created with a combination of a special rubber compound and tread design that provides maximum slip resistance. The unique rubber compound grips the microscopic roughness of the floor surface, while the grid pattern channels surface liquid out from under the shoe. This creates a surface which resists sliding in wet or dry conditions, and a triple cushion heel pad provides unsurpassed comfort. Try them for yourself. We're so sure that you'll love the safety, comfort, and style of these shoes that we are offering them with our exclusive 90-day in-home trial. Pick up the phone, put them on, and take a walk. If you are not completely amazed, simply return them within 90 days for a refund of the product purchase price. Call today.

A Mallwalker's Dream!

Slip Resistant- The Dx slip resistance out-sole is designed for maximum traction on all surfaces- especially slick or wet floors.

Comfortable- These shoes feature a comfort insole with triple density cushioning in the heel pad.

Durability- They feature leather uppers and the durable Dx rubber outsole.

Lightweight- The unique EVA mid-sole makes the shoes weigh less for all-day comfort.

Never slip and fall again!

Slip Resist Shoe

ZR-4997*(men)* / ZR-5004*(women)*

$79.95 +S&H

Please specify Black or White, shoe size, and width when ordering.

Mention promotional code 33260.

Call toll-free 24 hours a day

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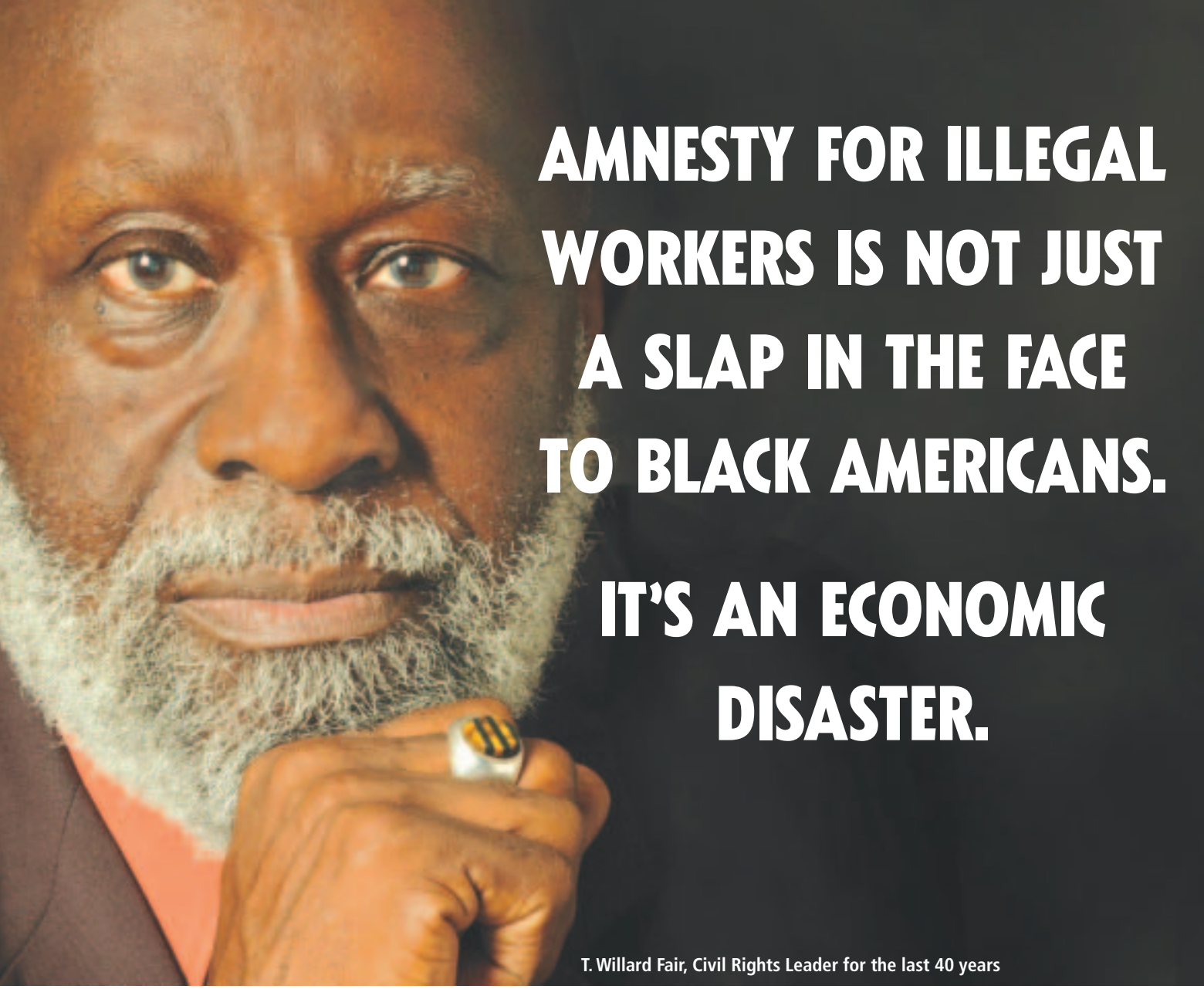

AMNESTY FOR ILLEGAL WORKERS IS NOT JUST A SLAP IN THE FACE TO BLACK AMERICANS.

IT'S AN ECONOMIC DISASTER.

T. Willard Fair, Civil Rights Leader for the last 40 years

My mission for 40 years has been to train Black Americans and find jobs for them. But it has become mission impossible as the government allows more and more jobs to be filled by legal and illegal foreign workers. Now Congress is considering amnesty for millions of illegal foreign workers. Some members see it as an easy way to get votes; some as cheap labor for their supporters. But to Black Americans, amnesty is an immoral seizure of our jobs.

Black Americans have lost hundreds of thousands of jobs to foreign workers willing to work for next to nothing. And the hiring of low-skilled immigrants is responsible for 40% of the decline in employment among Black American men.* Amnesty for illegal workers will further devastate many of our communities. Around 40% of Black American men are without a job today. Why would anybody favor giving American jobs to MORE foreign workers – especially illegal ones?

Coalition For The Future American Worker
www.AmericanWorker.org

*Source: National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 12518

Paid for by Coalition For The Future American Worker

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